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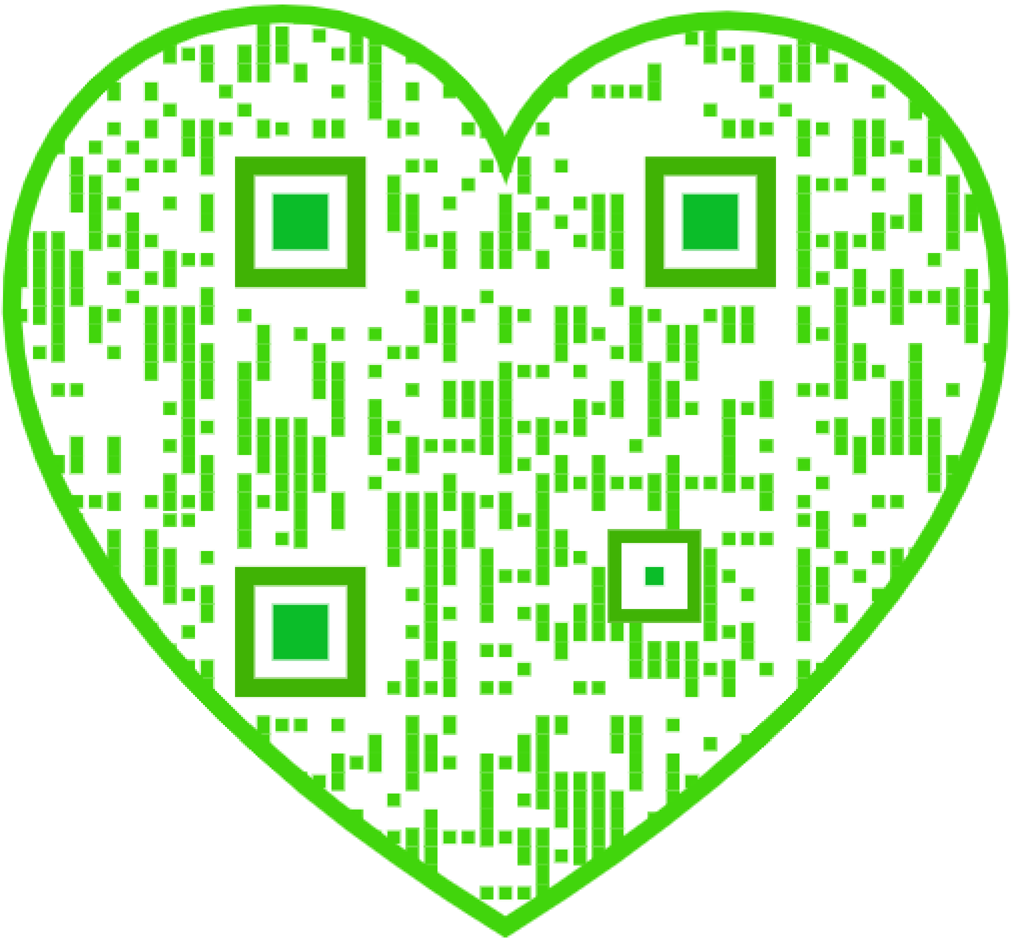

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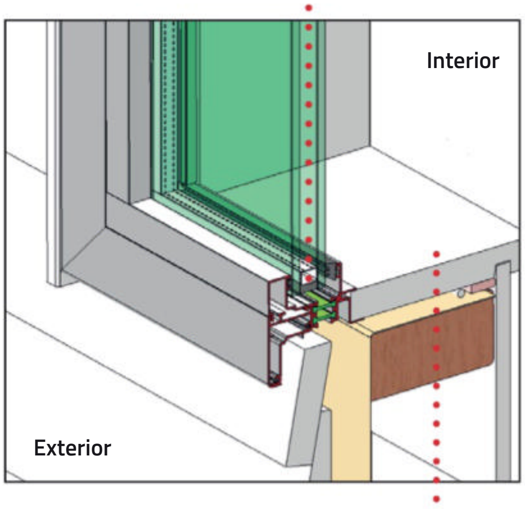

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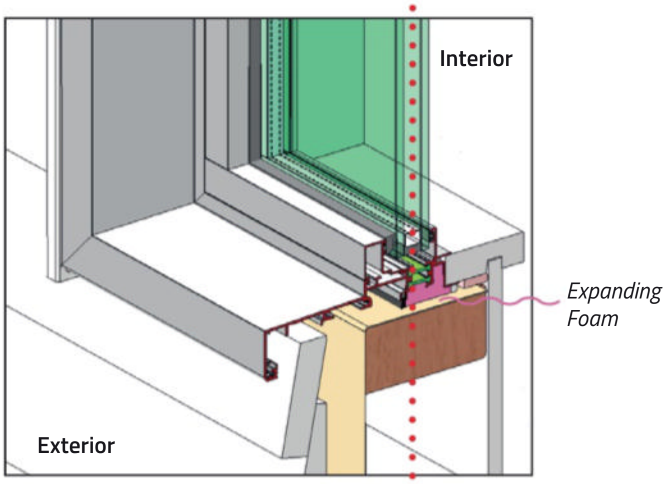

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Brutal reckonings

Chris Barton

Image: David St George.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE THE furore among architects over the depiction of architecture in *The Brutalist*. Brady Corbet's otherwise award-winning three-and-a-half-hour epic features László Tóth (Adrien Brody), an imaginary Hungarian-Jewish architect and Holocaust survivor, and his travails in post-war America to realise the American dream.

Edwin Heathcote at the *Financial Times* sees undoubted epic brilliance, but a clichéd portrayal of the architect as tortured, solitary, male genius – "a battle to defend the purity and perfection of his vision and a refusal to compromise." Architecture isn't like that, says Heathcote. "It is about accommodating people; users and clients, neighbours and authorities." Fair enough if the architect cliché included being actually tortured – Tóth was in Buchenwald – and being isolated by experiences few could comprehend.

Philip Kennicott at *The Washington Post* also overlooks Tóth's situation, finding a "caricature of architects as megalomaniacs, fanatic in their devotion to utopian visions and brutal in their indifference to the everyday humanity of those who love, serve and employ them". He finds a film committed to resuscitating manifestos of modernism. *The Brutalist* "goes all in on the idea that we still desperately need the old dyad of genius and modernist progress, that great minds, great thoughts, great works of human creativity can still transform us spiritually and materially."

The Guardian's Oliver Wainwright says architects take issue with a film that claims to be fictional but is clearly based on Bauhaus-trained architect Marcel Breuer, known for curved, tubular steel furniture "of a kind practically identical to Tóth's".

Breuer was also commissioned to design a brutalist church on a hill, for Benedictine monks, rather than a millionaire psychopath industrialist. The epic project went through similar agonies: Tóth regularly erupts with "prima-donna fits of screaming when he doesn't get his way".

The compromises resolved in the decade-long development of Breuer's church building, argues Wainwright, would have made for a much more interesting story than the film's two-dimensional portrayal of the tempestuous architect-client relationship. Truth is better than fiction.

Yet, Tóth's outburst delivers one of the best lines ever about the realities of making good architecture. "Everything that is ugly, cruel, stupid – but, most importantly, ugly – is your fault," he rages at an imposed project manager. You also wouldn't have the spectacular Carrara marble quarry scene where architect and client select materials. This is followed by the client sexually assaulting the architect, all the while insulting his race and status. It's an absurdly literal metaphor for the client/architect relationship and a reminder that anti-semitism is never far away.

"There's no brutalist architecture in *The Brutalist*," complains Thomas de Monchaux at *Tablet Magazine*. He notes the absence of the work of three towering figures: ex-Bauhaus wartime emigrés Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Jewish Lithuanian immigrant, Louis Kahn. That absence matters a lot to some architects, though surely the resonances of the title go well beyond architectural style.

Tóth's most ambitious commission, for his unhinged wealthy client Harrison Lee Van Buren (Guy Pearce), is a

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ON THE COVER
Sheppard & Rout's Punangairi, the new Department of Conservation Visitor Centre in Paparoa National Park on the West Coast of the South Island. Image: Jason Mann.

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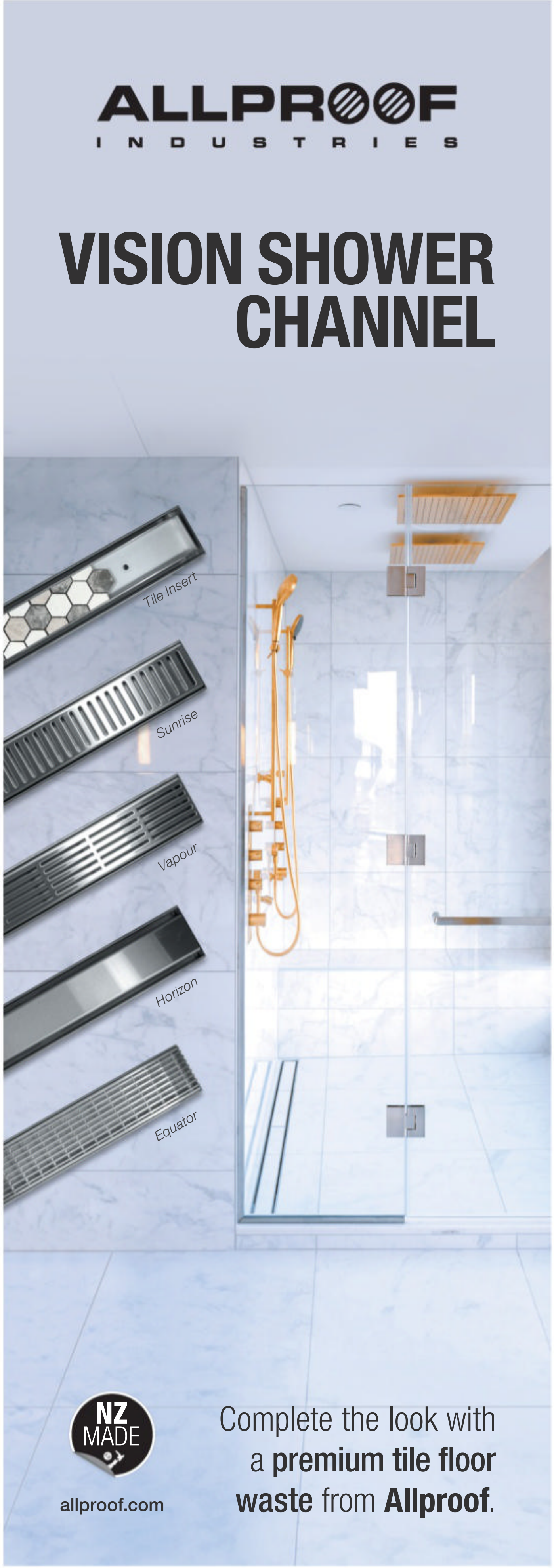

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huge community centre on a hilltop in Pennsylvania, featuring an auditorium, a gym and a chapel. What gets some architects riled is Tóth's inclusion of small rooms infused with painful memories, their proportions taken from Buchenwald concentration camp. "This then is a 'serious,' existential building, one concerned with life and death, darkness and light, suffering and redemption," says Heathcote. "Fine, perhaps, for a memorial or a crematorium chapel, less so, perhaps, for a community space, gym and library."

It's worth remembering here that the concentration camps and crematoria were designed by architects, including Bauhaus graduate Fritz Ertl, responsible for the brutal grid of horse-stable barracks that comprised Auschwitz-Birkenau. Organised in repeating units of 12 sheds, it's possible to see in the design a chilling echo of early modernist ideas about minimum habitation promoted by Neues Bauen (New Building) architects under the Weimar Republic. Those architects promoted large-scale production of affordable modern housing for urban populations. At Birkenau, by compressing the idea of existenzminimum (subsistence dwelling) beyond imaginable limits, the Nazi architects unbelievably crammed 744 people into each of the 174 sheds housing a routinely culled and replenished slave labour force of 125,000.

Yet architects surely bring their own experiences of space and its uses to their designs, especially experiences with unimaginable effects on their lives. For Tóth to repurpose the proportions of his prison doesn't seem unreasonable.

Architect Daniel Libeskind in *Religion Unplugged* asks what the title *The Brutalist* really signifies. "Is it that the brutal history of the 20th century and its totalitarian regimes and concentration camps have given birth to forms that symbolize the resistance to authority? Is 'brutality' reason, or is it an acknowledgment that after the Holocaust (and Hiroshima) architecture will never be the same?"

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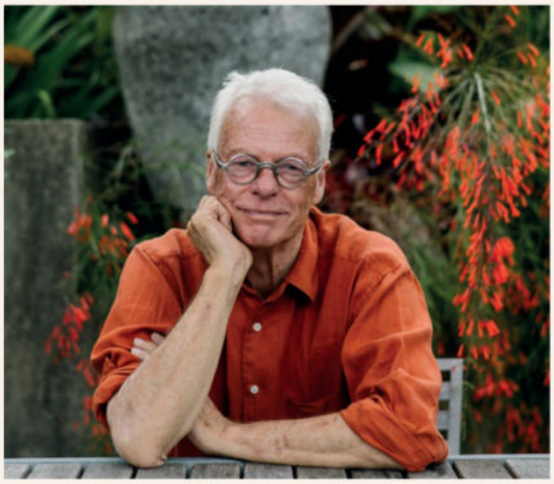
On death and the sublime

Pip Cheshire



ABOVE
Pip Cheshire. Photo: David St George.

THE TELEVISION BURBLED away in the background: the evening news. I was trying to head off a rook/bishop trap my former flatmate had set. Such was his confidence in the inescapable array he had established on the board that his attention shifted as I squirmed. He shared his thoughts on the many failures of the building into which he had just recently moved. I seized on the conversation, saved from my predicament on the board between us by this shift, the game forgotten as the newsreader announced that the very building my opponent had been discussing had just received an Institute of Architects award.

With the confidence of ignorance, I proclaimed the absurdity of awarding a building with so many obvious failures, whereupon my opponent challenged me to do something about it. In that moment, I transitioned, as one would now say, from a life of manufacturing and surfing to one of architecture. Within days, I was in the architecture school's dean's office, being told that "had I applied last year, it's possible I might have got in".

With that lukewarm encouragement, I sold up my life down south and moved north to a new one. One of the delights of the school was Claude Megson's photographic slide shows in which his beautiful, saturated images revealed the world of architecture. One of his most potent lectures focused on the Ahlambra, that sublime assemblage of hilltop gardens and palaces that I determined to visit.

I experienced an epiphany in the Alhambra's Generalife garden when, at last, I was there. It was not a full-blown 'road to Damascus' epiphany but one of those unsettling insights that sit and cast a shadow on the psyche. Amid the gentle reverie induced by those exquisite combinations of brick, water and planting, it became clear that rarely do we moderns match the ancients in the creation of the sublime. A more troubling thought followed; perhaps the quality of architecture might be correlated to the architect's sense of well-being and, furthermore, that only extremely rarely has a decent bit of architecture been made since architects stopped living in fear of being buried in the foundations of the remedial work if their project didn't 'cut the mustard'.

If this seems a bit extreme, you might consider the mythical story of the Taj Mahal architect's fate in which it is said that, after completion of his work, his thumbs were cut off to prevent duplication of the 'Taj's' sublime beauty. Though an apocryphal story, it did suggest a sort of reverse Darwinism in which the creators of great architecture are mutilated and hence lost to the profession, lowering the average skill level of the drawing office, until it is populated only by dimwits with operable opposed thumbs.

We contemporary practitioners are not generally in the pay of clients having sword-wielding hirelings and are pretty safe from physical retribution for a stuff-up. However, as it is said, "when Washington sneezes we get a cold" and the change to a more robust administration in that town may well herald a more aggressive approach to evaluating our work. I understand the new president has identified a few samplers for our US peers to aspire to in order to cleanse the republic of decadent 'modern' architecture and make it look more, well, Roman. At the very least, we might well polish our acanthus leaf and pediment detailing if we are to escape the wrath of clients keen to make Aotearoa great again, though any such initiative will be at renewed risk of losing one's thumbs, or perhaps mouse fingers.

We should enjoy our profession's commitment to judging the fruits of our labours without fear or favour, while it lasts. To its enormous credit, the Institute of Architects awards programme eschews the efficiencies of assessing award entries by image alone. Rather than locking up the jury with piles of carefully curated photos and screeds of adjective-heavy text, architectural foraging parties are dispatched across the motu to experience the projects.

An early internet chum in Los Angeles once typed through the dial-up connection that, while our messages were fun, he really needed to smell me to know me better. I was a bit alarmed at how this might pan out were we to meet and delayed travel to the city for as long as possible. When at last we did meet, it was apparent that 'smelling' was a sort of shorthand for a comprehensive review of me: my strange accent, clothing, odd gait, and unfamiliar views on the US, indigenous people and everything, really.

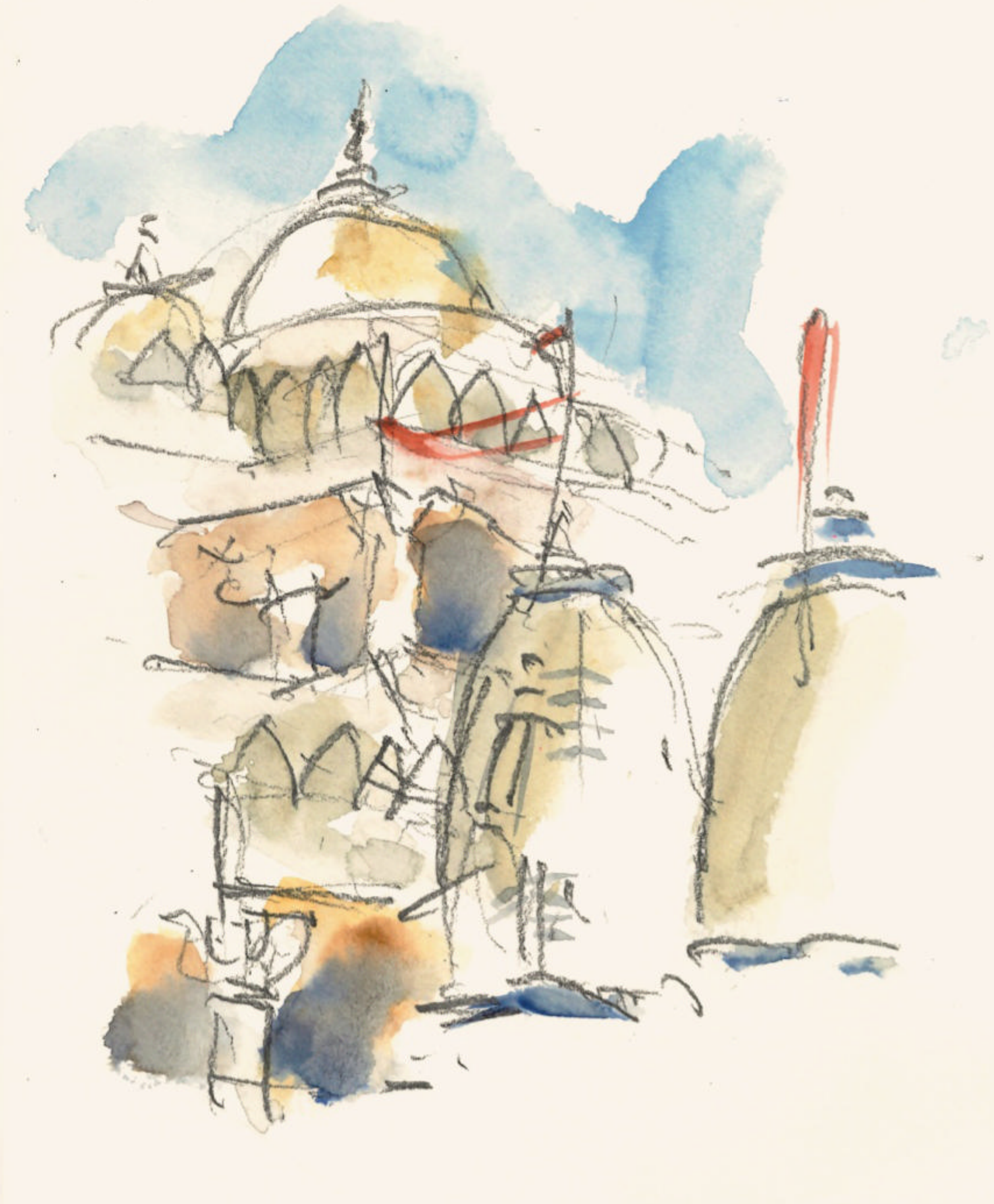
And so the institute jury is charged with smelling the entries, listening to clients and the sounds of their buildings, the reverberation of footfall and the silent corners, the fall of light, the slope of the land, the juxtaposition of colour, texture and material, the patterns of its use and occupation and, yes, even the smell of the building.

Buildings are an exchange in which the architect is but a bit player. The jury members bring their knowledge, experience and biases to examine the assemblage presented, seeing each entry as both an object in space and the manifestation of its programme of use and aspiration. They are challenged to assess the extent to which the project brings together all the elements in play – the labour, materials and intellectual endeavour – to make a unique building.

One of the challenges of assessing lies in the comparison of dissimilar projects: the rural and the urban, the domestic and the civic, the big, the small and so on. There's no doubt that setting a 50-square-metre back-country off-grid scintilla against four or five hundred metres of well-honed clifftop behemoth or an inner-city hotel is an interesting challenge.

A relatively recent initiative to 'level the playing field' and make judging a little easier has been the creation of new award categories, such that one might have one's entry judged against similar types of project. This is a useful convenience and offers a way of promoting one or another concerns that the institute might have.

The important and immediate concern for sustainability, for example, has bedevilled the institute for years as it has sought to offer guidance, if not leadership, to its members in their endeavours to balance care of a client's best interests with those of the planet. The promotion of an award category acknowledging the success of a project in achieving construction with a diminished impact on the environment is a useful lever for coercing greater consideration of the issue. Laudable though this aim is, it opens the door to projects that may well be highly successful in reducing their impacts on ecology and ecosystem yet lamentable in other matters, perhaps: for example, contextual concerns, decolonisation or, even, the 'correct and magnificent play of solids in light'. Some will argue that the imperative to engage in the possibility of global extinction is so acute that we can afford to cast off more ephemeral concerns. Yet surely great, even good, architecture is the ability to reconcile complex and often contradictory aspirations and expectations in order to create the sublime. If juries are really to get the full scent of the projects visited, they must be freed of the topical demands of the day, no matter how important the issue.



ABOVE
I am pretty sure there is no one buried under this sublime temple on the road to Jodhpur.
Pip Cheshire, 2024.

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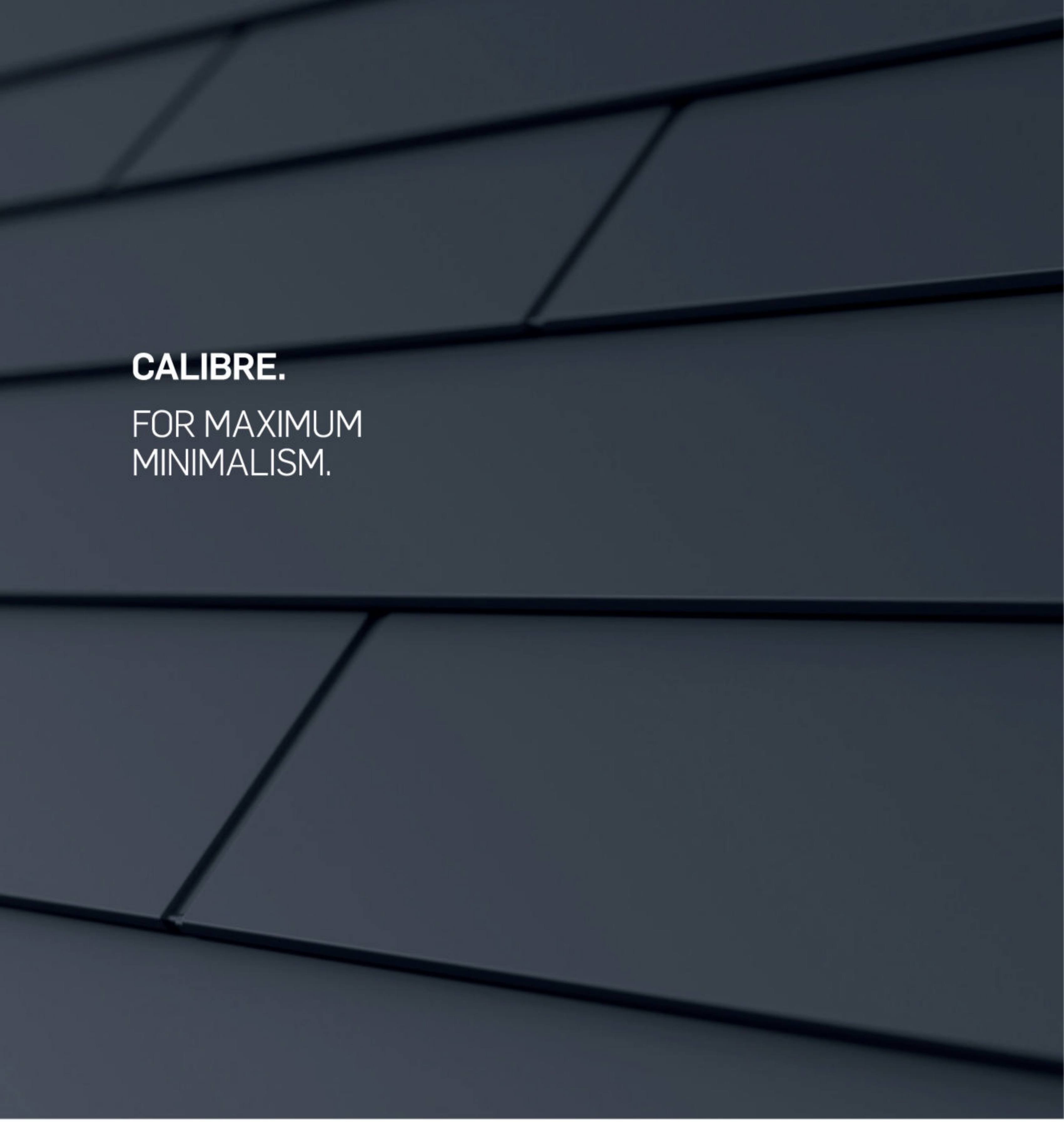

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The politics of the architect’s narrative

Karamia Müller

ABOVE Karamia Müller. Photo: David St George.

READER, I WENT TO SEE *The Brutalist*… and, yikes. And I’m not the only one. Oliver Wainwright’s review in *The Guardian* charts the growing critical mass within the architectural community against it. How did I not love *The Brutalist*? Let me count the ways.

Architecture has long been susceptible to the cult of the singular genius – a visionary figure, so often tormented, with poor boundaries and worse work–life balance, whose work is framed as the inevitable, heroic march of progress. *The Brutalist*, a recent film by Brady Corbet starring Adrien Brody, leans into this myth with the full weight of modernism behind it. It tells the story of an architect, László Tóth (a stand-in for Marcel Breuer), a Hungarian Jewish refugee who rises to international fame in post-war America.

The film begins with a staccato rhythm – sparse dialogue in favour of movement and suggestive backtracks. This, to me, was enjoyable. But where it glorifies the ‘tortured’ master-builder and walks well-worn tropes of the lone genius shaping the world in his image: not so much. No cigar.

Beneath its aesthetic choices, *The Brutalist* is not just about architecture. It is a political statement enshrined in concrete: an unsustainable amount, literally and figuratively. It arrives at a moment when architecture’s entanglement with power, capital and nation-building is under more scrutiny than ever, particularly in relation to Israel and its ongoing violence in Palestine. The film’s not-so-subtle positioning, its treatment of displacement and its celebration of modernist ideals align it with a long-standing pattern of using the built environment as a tool of political ideology. And it does so with little self-reflection. That it is currently being celebrated as a filmic feat concerns me.

The film’s biggest flaw is its uncritical embrace of the ‘starchitect’ narrative. This model, deeply embedded in 20th-century architectural storytelling, elevates the figures we all come to know in the first weeks of architecture school – Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe – as singular forces of change. We make pilgrimages to their buildings, dragging along partners, friends and family, while locals shrug.

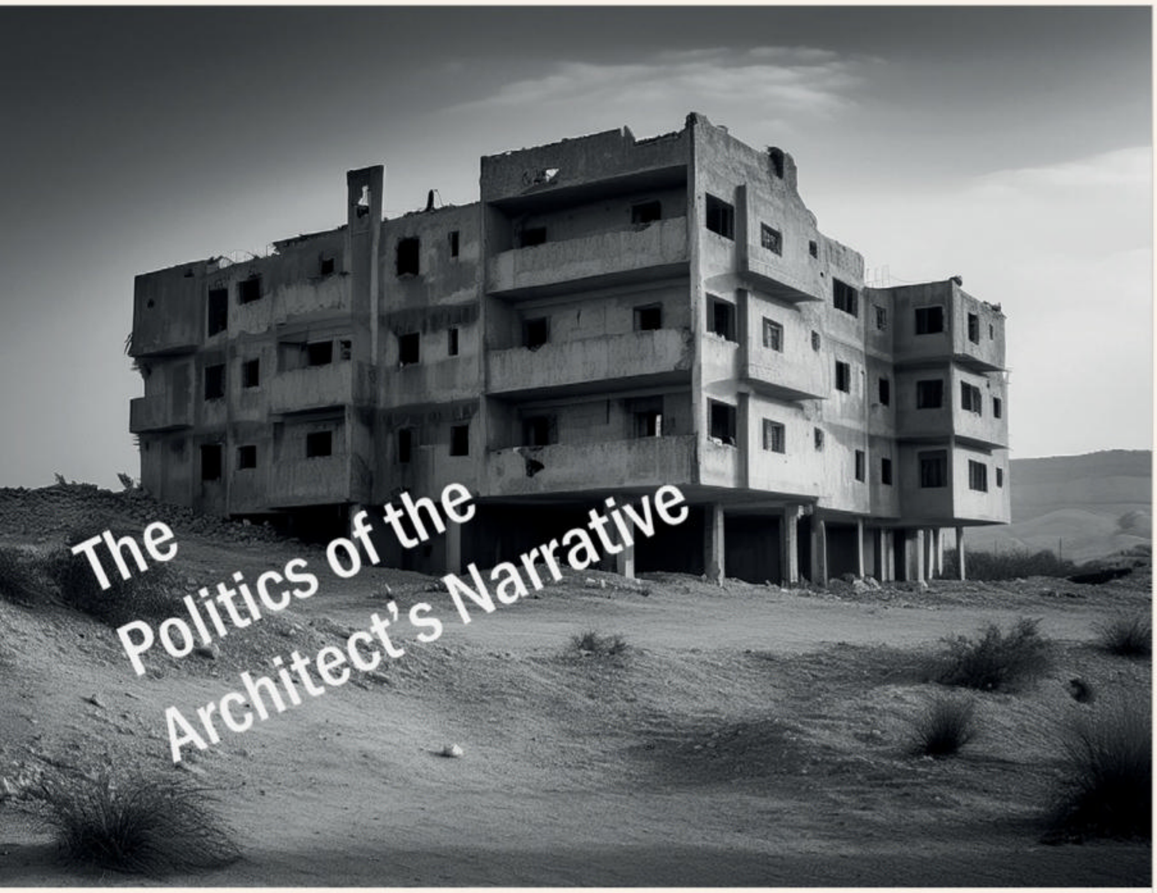
The reality of the built environment is far messier. Architecture is a collaborative practice, shaped by political, economic and social forces – not just the will and might of a single, tormented mind.

By framing László Tóth as a brilliant but tortured genius, *The Brutalist* reinforces an outdated and damaging myth. It erases the labour of draftsmen, engineers, builders and communities that actually bring architecture to life. More importantly, it distracts from the material consequences of architecture – who it serves, who it displaces and what ideologies it upholds.

This narrative is not just about artistic vanity. The lone, wounded genius myth has long justified harmful urban interventions, from modernist slum clearances to luxury developments that erase working-class communities and gentrify neighbourhoods. Spoiler alert: it also justifies a healthy heroin habit… which seemed to serve only as a prophecy-fulfilling plotline. The film aligns all too well with the broader ideology of starchitecture – architecture as spectacle for the elite rather than as a public good.

Modernism in architecture has always carried ideological weight – as heavy, and as seemingly immutable, as the concrete that defined it. We have all sat in lectures where the early 20th century is framed as a break from a dusty past – embracing seductive clarity, functional design and a rejection of ornamentation. But this aesthetic revolution is rarely presented alongside its counterpoint: modernist architects working, often uncritically, with regimes of power, from Mussolini’s Italy to post-war American corporate expansion.

The Brutalist romanticises this modernist epoch (I believe the word epoch is even used in the film – so excuse my use of it here) without reckoning with its



ABOVE
A visual meditation on brutalist architecture, abandonment and the ideological weight of the built environment. Karamia Müller, 2025.

consequences. Brutalism itself, as a subset of modernism, was often deployed as a tool of state power – whether in Soviet housing blocks, post-colonial African capitals or Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine. The film positions Tóth's architectural vision as a symbol of resilience and reinvention, yet it fails to reconcile the ways in which modernism, particularly in Israel, has been used to erase indigenous Palestinian spaces and histories.

Israeli architecture has long been entwined with colonial expansion. The Bauhaus-inspired 'White City' of Tel Aviv, often celebrated as a triumph of modernist urbanism, was built on the rubble of Palestinian Jaffa. Brutalist architecture in Israel has been deployed in state-building projects, from housing developments to military outposts. In this context – and in the current moment – *The Brutalist*'s glorification of modernist ideals takes on a more troubling significance.

Perhaps the most urgent critique of *The Brutalist* is its pro-Israel undercurrent, which is particularly harmful in the wake of Israel's assault on Gaza. The film presents Jewish displacement as a central theme, positioning its protagonist as a survivor who rebuilds through architecture. While this is an important historical narrative, it is presented in isolation, detached from the present-day displacement of Palestinians.

As reports emerge of thousands of Palestinians walking to northern Gaza, they will inevitably reach homes that have been bombed to rubble. One could argue that *The Brutalist* is set in a specific historical period, disconnected from the present. Yet, somewhat jarringly, it flashes forward to a fictional award ceremony at the 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale. This is a common pattern in cultural narratives about architecture and diaspora. Modernist contributions are often framed as stories of resilience, revealing a sort of truth by stripping away the ornamental as criminal. But they are rarely placed in conversation with the displacement of others – particularly Palestinians, who continue to be uprooted, dispossessed and subjected to architectural erasure through settler-colonialism.

By centring the trauma of its protagonist without acknowledging the way that modernist and brutalist architecture has been instrumentalised in the Israeli state-building project, *The Brutalist* risks perpetuating a one-sided narrative. 'Risks' is a light touch – it is one-sided. This omission is especially glaring in the context of the recent ceasefire and all that has preceded it. If architecture is political, then so is its storytelling.

Ultimately, *The Brutalist* fails because it clings to an outdated – and already well-proven problematic – vision of architecture. It is one that elevates the individual over the collective, the myth over the material reality and aesthetic ideals over political consequences. If the film inadvertently reveals anything, it's that architecture needs new ways of telling its own stories.

These stories must focus on the communities that architecture impacts. Rather than celebrating modernism in isolation, we ought to examine its entanglements with power, displacement and capital. And, in this moment, as Palestinian homes, schools and hospitals have been systematically destroyed, we should be asking harder questions about architecture's complicity in violence.

Architecture has always been a political act. It is loved by its practitioners for this reason; its stories ought to reflect that truth. If that means rethinking what stories are told and by whom, so be it.

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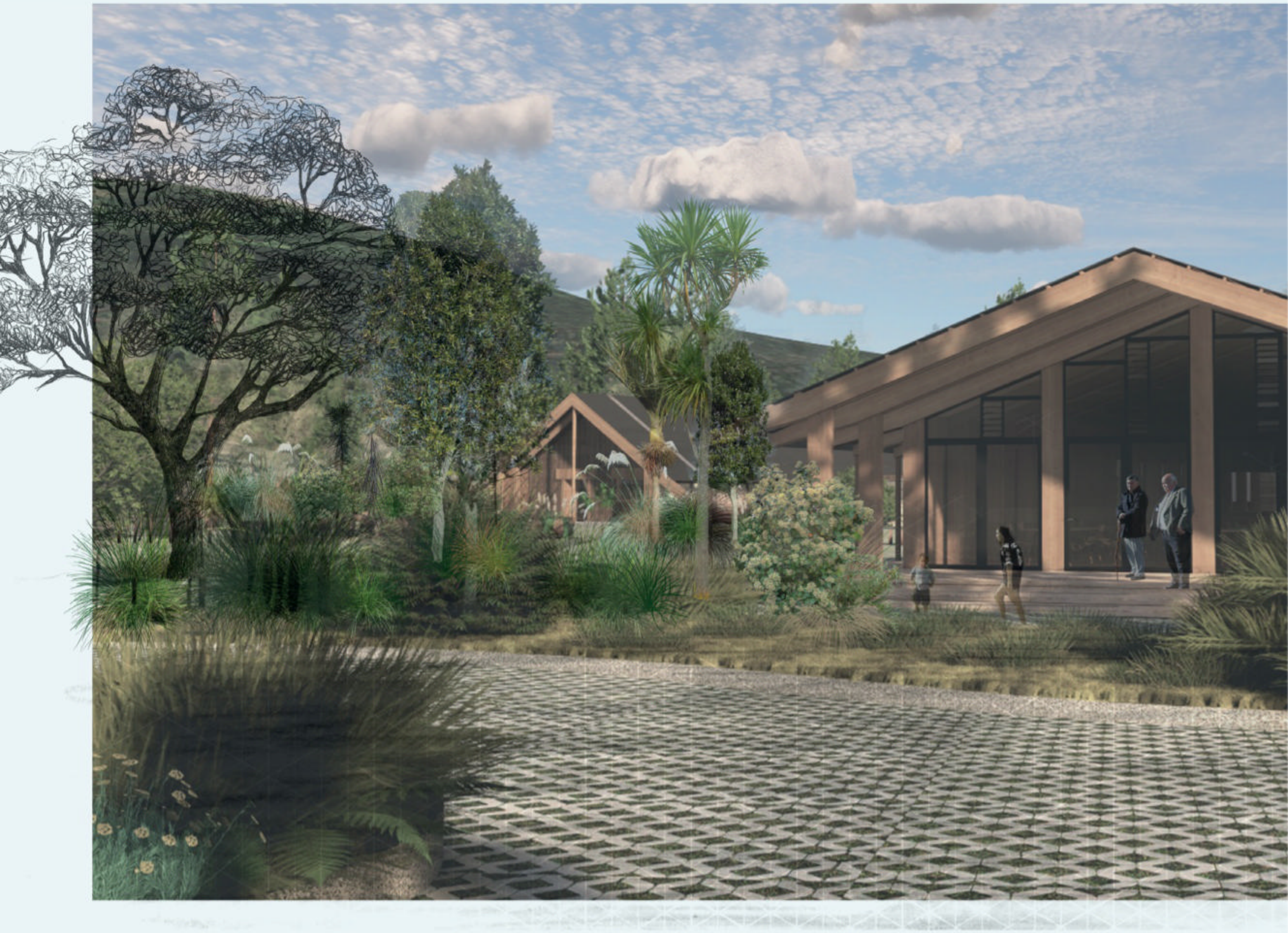


TOWARDS A CULTURAL REVIVAL

West Auckland-based iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki is soon to be re-established on its whenua at Te Henga Bethells Beach. Having suffered firstly during the 1820s' musket raids and then again during colonisation – the Crown had acquired most of West Auckland by 1854 – the iwi was left practically landless by the 1950s. Its last kāinga and marae at Kōpironui (Woodhill) and Waiti (Te Henga) were lost during this time.

The Monk Mackenzie-designed Te Henga Kāinga Whakahirahira marae and papakāinga represents a significant milestone in the iwi's cultural revival; the project is made up of a suite of both residential and communal buildings, as well as an extensive ecosystem revitalisation scheme to regenerate whenua currently overrun with introduced species.

"The buildings have been designed with an ecological focus, leaving a light touch on the whenua and encouraging renewed relationships between tangata and taiao," explains project architect Raukura Turei. "A strong emphasis has been placed on resilience in order to safeguard the iwi's self-determination and reduce its reliance on external infrastructure."

Te Henga Kāinga's timber structure and understated steel roofing see it recede visually into the landscape while subtly acknowledging the surrounding Waitākere Ranges and ngāhere, and the moana beyond. Architectural designer Tane Pamatatau says the overarching design emphasis, developed through wānanga with the iwi, is on the formation of meaningful and useful collective spaces that are safe for tamariki and kaumātua alike. "Vehicles are relegated to the site edges, leaving its centre as a vibrant māra of native planting, with meandering pathways around landscaped mounding creating a community hub intertwined with the whenua."

The marae includes a wharenui, a wharepaku, a whare ako and a whare kai. The wharenui is adorned with rammed earth to illustrate the notion of surrounding the iwi in its own whenua and its roof drains directly to the ground.

Render: Supplied.

"This movement of wai highlights the connection between Ranginui and Papatūānuku," says Turei, "and the wharenui interior traces the journey from Te Kore to Te Ao Mārama through the use of natural light and honours Ngā Rau Pou ā Maki through slot windows that draw in the taiao." The generous whare kai will enable Te Kawerau ā Maki to practise manaakitanga and host events, with a commercial-scale indoor kitchen and an outdoor kāuta and mahinga kai area for preparing hunted kai, kai moana and hāngi.

The papakāinga includes four two-bedroom, single-level kaumātua homes and four four-bedroom spatially generous whānau homes, which are accessible and flexible for the intergenerational needs of whānau.

The project received resource consent and completed developed design in 2024. Te Kawerau ā Maki is now applying for building consent and is fund-raising to help realise the project. **tekawerau.iwi.nz/about-us/**

HOUSING SUMMIT 2025

This year's Housing Summit, 'Where the climate crisis meets the housing crisis', will see economics, housing, climate and political commentator Bernard Hickey in the role of MC. Guest speakers will cover: global action on net-zero road maps by the International Energy Agency, policies and actions influencing lower-carbon, energy-efficient homes with Francesca Muskovic (Property Council of Australia) and Luke Menzel (Australia's Energy Efficiency Council); delivering high-quality homes at scale with Mark Todd (Ockham Residential), Cate Kearney (Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust), Pamela Bell (New Zealand Institute of Building), Paul Gilberd (Community Housing Aotearoa), Malcolm Fleming (New Zealand Certified Builders Association) and Steve Moe (Parry Field Lawyers); and more.

The summit will be held on Wednesday 7 May at the Grand Millennium Hotel in Auckland.
nzgbc.org.nz/housing-summit-2025

FAST FORWARD LECTURE SERIES 2025

There are three remaining lectures in the University of Auckland's Fast Forward series for Semester One:

- Sarosh Mulla, Pac Studio – *Pac Studio fun*
  Wednesday 26 March, 6.30pm
- Andre de Graaf and Helen Kerr, Isthmus – *Creating and meeting demand*
  Wednesday 2 April, 6.30pm
- Dr Gill Matthewson, Parlour, Melbourne – *The Path to Parlour*
  Wednesday 9 April, 6.30pm

To register for the lectures, visit **auckland.ac.nz/en/engineering/news-and-events/events/fast-forward.html**

Photograph: Sam Hartnett.

ABOVE Pac Studio's changing sheds for the recently opened swimming pool and Manu platform at Auckland's Karanga Plaza Tidal Steps in Wynyard Quarter.

THE DRAWING BOARD RETURNS

Season 2 of Faultline Films' *The Drawing Board* is screening on Sundays at 7.30pm on Whakaata Māori and Māori+ and is once again hosted by Derek Kawiti, Professor of Architecture at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University. The eight-episode series, asking "What does contemporary Māori architecture look like?", features Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, Pā Reo at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, Wairahi marae, Te Taumata o Kupe, The Pā, Te-Matau-a-Māui, Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa and Ngā Mokopuna at Te Herenga Waka.

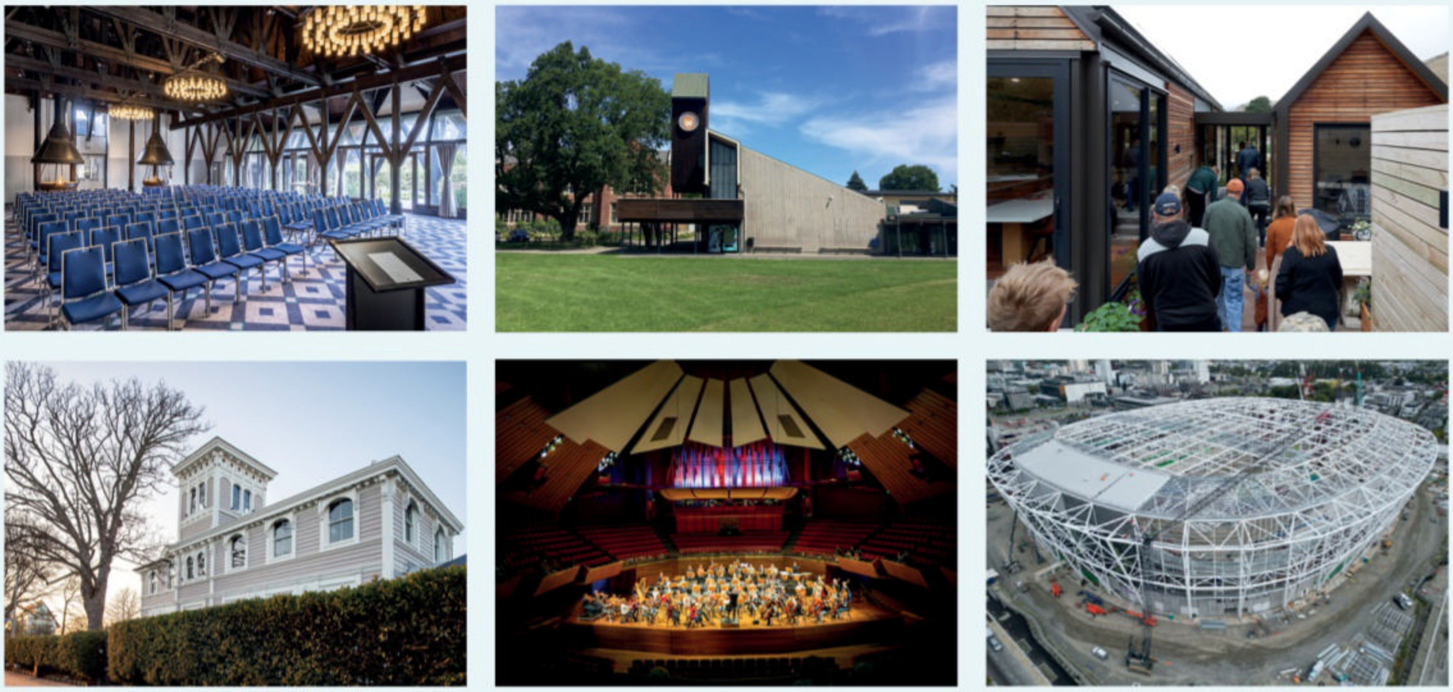
Image: Supplied.

EXPLORE ŌTAUTAHI THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Presented by Te Pūtahi, the annual Open Christchurch festival is set to return on 2–4 May with a selection of the city's best buildings and designed spaces for attendees to explore. This year's programme, the largest to date, includes 51 buildings, five guided walks, four free-standing architectural structures and two designed landscapes, as well as a host of talks, tours, exhibitions and activities.

Benjamin Mountfort works, such as the Former Addington Gaol and The Christchurch Club, are celebrated in recognition of the bicentenary of his birth, as is design excellence in performance spaces – attendees will be amongst the first to check out the Court Theatre, which is due to open that weekend. Other highlights during the festival include the flamboyant Peter Beaven design, Chateau on the Park, and the tiniest treasure in the programme, Bull O'Sullivan's Chapel of St Teresa of Lisieux.

The full programme will be released on 20 March. For more detail and to book, see **openchch.nz**



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Chateau on the Park, now DoubleTree by Hilton (Beaven Hunt Associates, 1975), photo courtesy DoubleTree by Hilton; Christchurch Boys' High Big Room (Hall and McKenzie, 1981; restoration and alterations: Athfield Architects, 2021), photo courtesy Athfield Architects; Korako Whānau Papakāinga (Royal Associates Architects, 2023), photo by Sarah Rowlands; Te Kaha Stadium (Warren and Mahoney and Populous, ongoing), photo courtesy CCC; Christchurch Town Hall (Warren and Mahoney, 1966–1972 and 2019), photo by Peanut Productions; The Christchurch Club (Benjamin Mountfort, 1859–1862; restoration and addition: Warren and Mahoney, 2015), photo by Peanut Productions.

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CHALLENGING GENDER NORMS IN ARCHITECTURE

Josh Sanoria of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington's School of Architecture was the winner of the **2024 Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects Resene Student Design Awards**. Here, he explains his escapist, explorative thesis, *Queeriosities of Space*, and the ways in which architecture can break down barriers and encourage diversity and inclusivity.

Queeriosities of Space explores the cross-cultural expressions and interpretations of queer spaces in the Philippines and Aotearoa New Zealand. The queer cultures of these countries reveal evident differences. In the Philippines, same-sex marriage remains prohibited and there are no legal protections against public discrimination. In contrast, New Zealand recognises marriage equality and enforces anti-discrimination laws under the Human Rights Act 1993. However, despite these protections, living in New Zealand unmasked the presence of exclusion, evident in the prevalence of private housing advertised as 'LGBT-friendly', raising questions about the depth of queer acceptance in Aotearoa.

The notions of 'queer' and 'queer spaces' are explored through theories that critique and challenge traditional architecture, historically shaped by gender binaries of men and women. Cross-cultural differences and similarities in queer cultures are examined through engagement with queer communities in both countries. These insights are further supported by stories of lived experiences, which serve as stepping stones towards creating safe and inclusive spaces.

This thesis presents two outcomes that reflect each queer cultural context. In the Philippines, where queer acceptance is still evolving, inspirations were drawn from The Golden Gays, an organisation of estranged elderly gay men and trans women who are often overlooked by society. Their story inspired a design that repurposes an existing building, reflecting their lives as performers. The existing façade symbolises the 'closet', serving as a protective layer that conceals the spaces within the building.

Photography: 01, Kattia Duncan. All others, Josh Sanoria.

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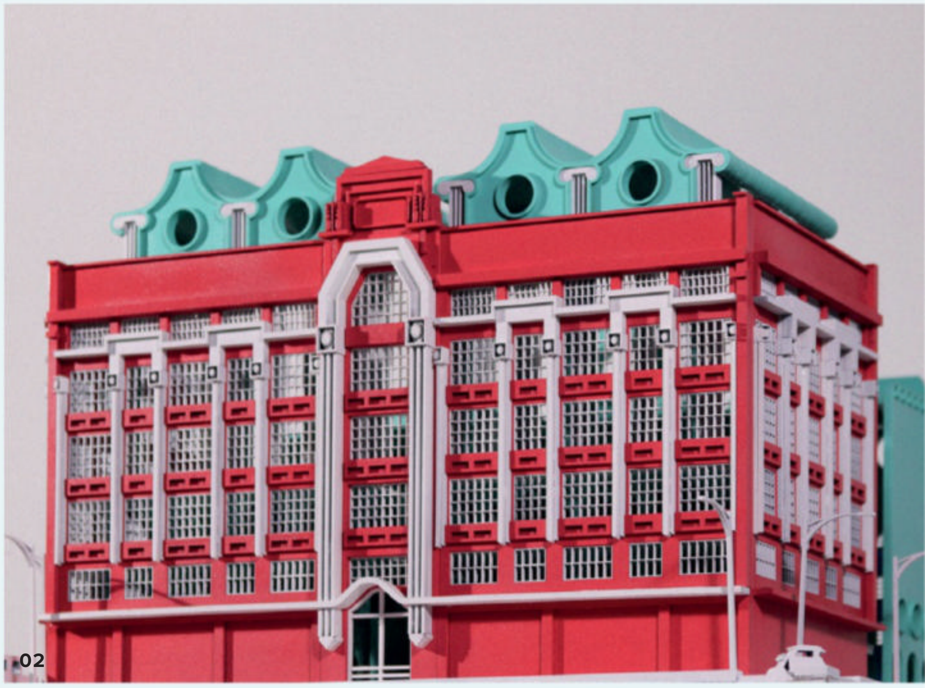
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01 Josh Sanoria with his project *Queeriosities of Space*, exhibited at Victoria University of Wellington. exhibition.

02 Queen of the Streets shows the re-use of an existing building in Escolta, Manila.

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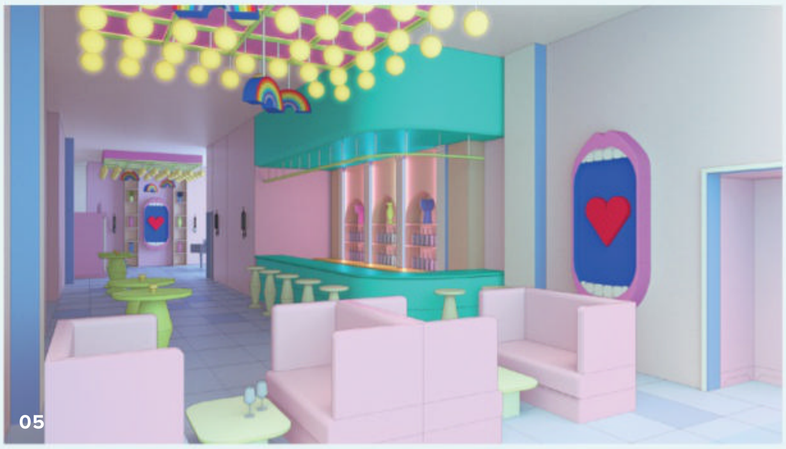
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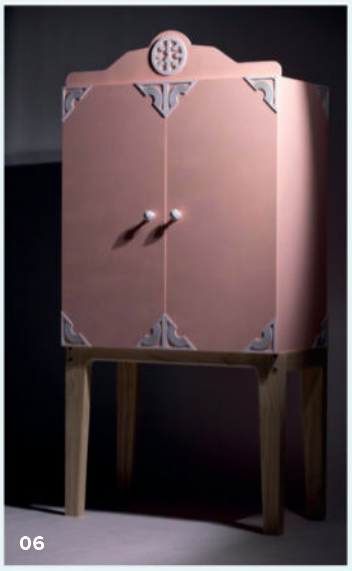
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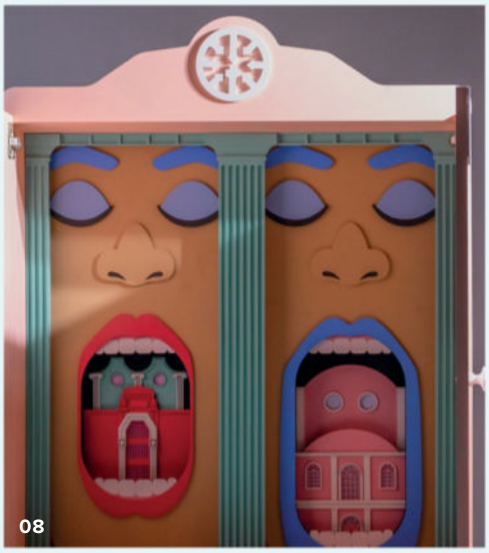
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The living areas are designed to challenge traditional family structures, such as the archetype of husband-and-wife roles. Operable walls allow the transformation of bedrooms and living spaces into larger, open areas, encouraging human connections while enabling occupants to adjust privacy levels as needed.

In New Zealand, discussions with the queer community emphasised themes of transformation. This inspired a design reflecting the journey of coming out. The space begins with a symbolic 'closet', through which each occupant enters to explore their gender identity while connecting with like-minded people. The lounge bar within this space features dim lighting and seating arrangements that reduce direct confrontation, creating a sense of comfort and intimacy.

As occupants gain confidence in their identities, they exit through a closet door, leading to a performance space that symbolises self-expression. For those who have faced public hostility, such spaces can also become pathways of healing. By retreating into the closet, its occupants can undergo a transformative process, reintegrating into public life with renewed courage. This space celebrates individuality and serves as a bridge for integrating with the broader community, including those outside the queer community.

The study highlights the ways in which human experiences can influence the creation of queer spaces, as well as how these spaces resist or adapt to heteronormative norms. Through the queer lens, this thesis re-imagines architectural design as a tool to welcome inclusivity and belonging, challenging the traditional image of space-making. By employing a methodology that blends ethnographic research, spatial analysis and speculative design, *Queeriosities of Space* positions queer spaces as sites of resilience, creativity and self-expression. The research ultimately aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersections between spatial occupation and identity, offering new perspectives for designing inclusive built environments.

03–04 The Pink Swan on Wellington's Cuba Street houses a performance space, a lounge bar and an art gallery.

05 The Pink Swan lounge bar.

06–07 Welcome to the Closet.

08–10 The Liberation of the Closeted Space.

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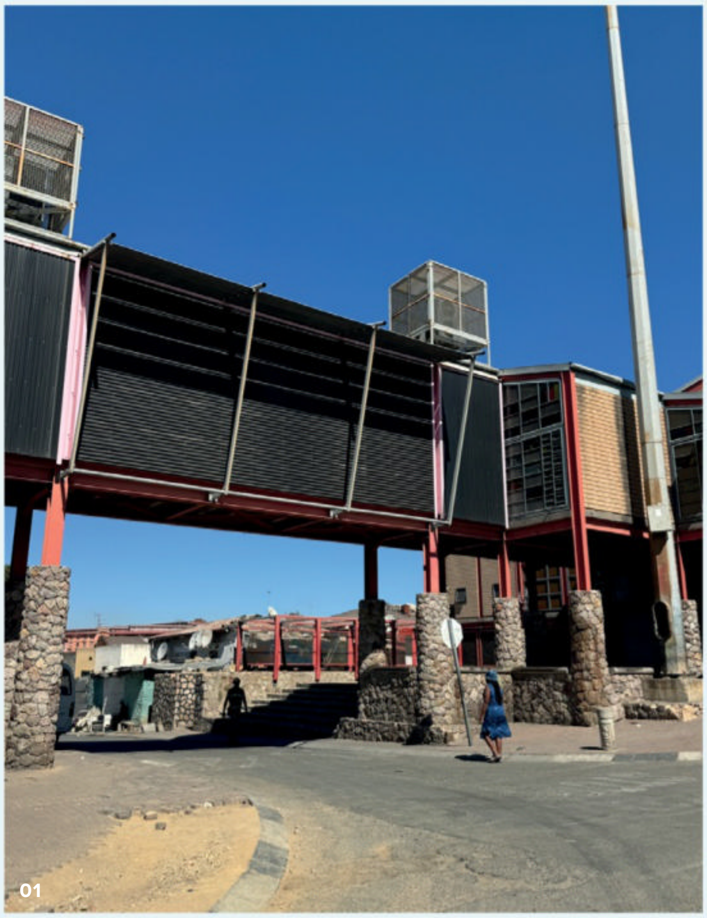
ESSAY FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

Jeremy Smith reports from South Africa, where he and architect **Peter Rich** buckled up and set off together in search of rainbows.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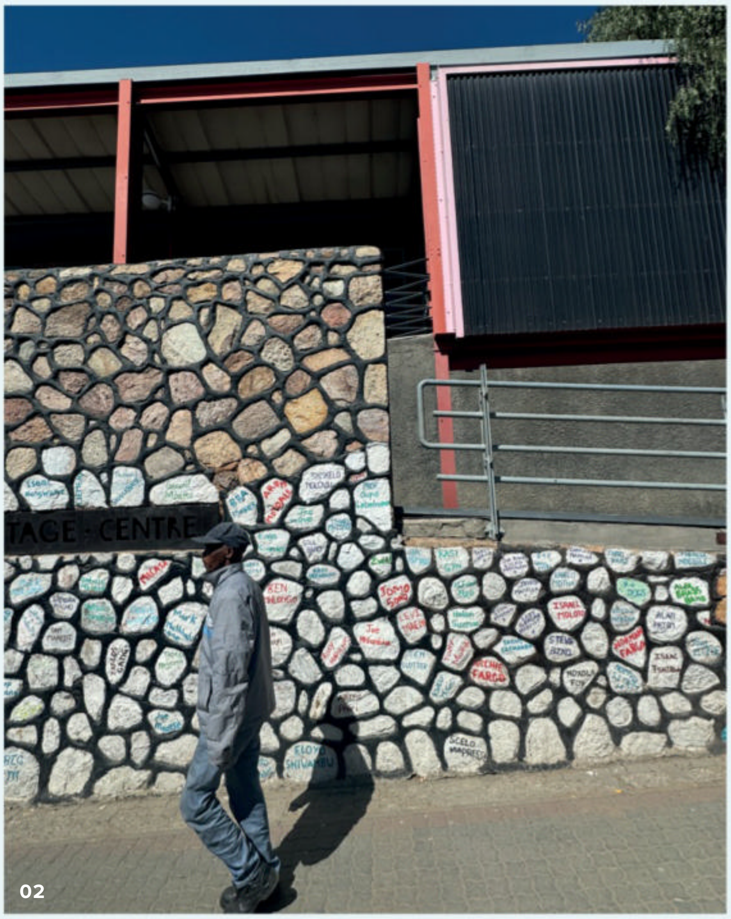

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There’s little point in talking about the weather in Southern Africa. Winter clouds rarely make the forecast, with the sun seemingly arriving larger than it did the day before and with a relentlessness matching only the emptiness and beauty of the landscape. Narratives are super-tough here, for this is somewhere many have travelled to but also a place many have travelled from. Out of Africa exchange rates these days have none of the weight of those colonial mining suitcases and, today, South Africa is packing short at least two million houses. That, according to the United Nations, “leaves some 12 million people in dire need of hous[ing]”.[1] Such altitudes take some climbing. So, before giving a masterclass to the South African Institute of Architects and a professorial lecture at the University of the Free State as part of Africa’s first PhD through Creative Practice programme, I buckle into a very small car with legendary South African architect Peter Rich, rev the experience past four thousand and go looking for rainbows.

“Architecture is people and realities” our five-day conversation begins as we drive through J’burg, past the world’s largest pot of gold that reefed some three kilometres underground and now lies emptied. We head into the township of Alexandra to see a building Rich designed more than 20 years ago. It’s worth journeying to see, being “built on either side and on top of a busy street”[2] as *Lonely Planet* describes. Miraculously, it can still be found, for it’s easy to lose buildings amongst a need for shelter and materials. Architecture dispatched here is readily burnt, pulled down or transplanted piece by piece.

Yet, Rich’s Alexandra Heritage Centre bridges a way to some kind of immortality and sits without visible sequence, when each element or the building itself arrived is as ambiguous as the fabric of its community. So, too, are the signatures that increasingly graffiti the stonework walls as some kind of thanks for listening. Here’s a rainbow, and Rich is treated as such as we wander the neighbourhood and experience an informal vitality, free from the rulings of city planners. The streets here are scaled with

01 Architect Peter Rich’s Alexandra Heritage Centre.

02 Signature graffiti on the Alexandra Heritage Centre.

03 Openstudio Architects’ Swartberg House on the outskirts of Prince Albert.

04 The Valley of Desolation.

active edges, sheltering courtyards and the innate generosity that comes from people having to sort things out on their own. But it's tough and experience here is everything. As we drive out of the township, there are some official-looking uniforms standing on the road waving us to where we might imagine a kerb. Hold-up! and we floor-it out onto the freeway. "Police here have cars," I'm told. Getting in and out of anywhere in South Africa takes some effort.

It's not long in African time (the next day) before things start arriving. Ant hills turn into the mountains of the Great Karoo in some kind of slow-moving front-seat theatre. By the time we climb up to the Valley of Desolation, we are in some of the oldest tabletop mountains in the world and looking out over plains of epic distance and who knows what? Baboons for sure: I can hear them. "Lions?" I ask, as I re-tuck my pants into my socks in some kind of we-can-walk-barefoot-in-our-forests paranoia. Rich just laughs; he's the lion. When we arrive at the next settlement, with its South African stereotypical formalised front and informal back, he leans on a fence and oxymorons an answer: "You'll need to go to a game park."

It is for these discussions on spatial freedoms that, after first visiting urban Alexandra, Rich has brought me into the hinterland. His friends and heroes Pancho Guedes and BV Doshi have ridden along with us, in absentia, to remind us that freedoms architecturally find voice through collectivity. Whether house, church or theatre, it is hard to be any kind of neighbour behind a fence that a giraffe wouldn't dare stretch to look over for all that high-voltage barbed wire at 15 feet. If there's irony in connecting residential fencing to an impenetrable urban grid, there are also lessons in participating with context.

In the middle of nowhere, we find little sheds bordering the freeway and running at what looks like 30-metre spacings all the way to the horizon. A house is a house and, perhaps, relief and improvements come with time. But, without insulation, services, industry or anything at all between buildings, it's hard to talk. Emptiness is also a fence and the only people to be seen are walking along the road.

But there's also housing that breathes with its landscape through clever design and age-old patterns to settlement. Openstudio Architects' Swartberg House with its stucco-ed inside and out plan is a stand-alone private house, which is both open and closed, and, opens and closes. Without any mechanical heating or cooling, its shuttered thermal-mass vernacular is, as London-based architect and owner Jennifer Beningfield tells me, designed to be "driven" with the desert sun and wind. In Lesotho, with architect Lefu Namane, I visit simple thatched and mud round houses and their more contemporary, corrugated-iron and cinder-block rectilinear alternatives. No matter its shape, each shares space with its neighbours. When we get a flat tyre, someone runs to the next village to fetch glue. Such connections have evolved in their groupings of buildings. While waiting, we happily chat in the space between houses. "An African house is a village," as Rich puts it. There's more to life without fences; there's conversation.

So, to Bloemfontein and an architectural education being voiced at the University of the Free State. We start with my masterclass, where we investigate the ways in which architects might innovate to develop means of contributing in the local context. What questions might be asked? What briefs might be written? There are rich pickings for there's much to

03

04

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3 Peter Cook, 'Pancho Guedes (1925–2015)', *The Architectural Review*. architectural-review.com/essays/reputations/pancho-guedes-1925-2015 27 March 2012.

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do in a city plan that still looks remarkably similar to a former life 30 years ago. With little money available for anything, finding an architecture that tackles problems and gets around fences is golden.

Around 500 architects from all over Southern Africa have congregated for the Sophia Gray Memorial Lecture and Exhibition, which, this year, is presented by André Eksteen and Braam de Villiers of Pretoria's Earthworld Architects. Their exhibition traces their prototyping of larger-format timber into the African architectural palette. I wonder where reducing scales might lead in designing forest-like quantities of housing. My masterclass is a full house of almost a hundred and, on the way, I meet some young African students who bravely come and present their thinking. Their emerging voice is proud and important, for, as they note, extraordinary efforts have been made by many people to get them here. They are also clever and suggest opening the nexus between the two sides of town through inhabitation. They propose widening rather than narrowing. It's inclusive and fenceless.

The same students bring many friends and classmates to my professorial lecture. Don't expect questions afterwards, I'm politely told beforehand – the questions run as long as the lecture did and then longer still after. "We take every opportunity," these young Africans tell me.

I see them again over the next week as I critique PhDs from all around Africa in a programme, established and led by Jonathan Noble, which is attracting architectural minds from all directions. My student friends are looking and learning, as is the doctoral research which seeks a refinding of place and narrative. There's research into African myth-making, African informal urbanism and, even, African airports. As Guedes, whose artwork adorns the walls, initiated, "I claim for architects the rights and liberties that painters and poets have held for so long."[3] People help people and architecture helps architecture.

So, here's to education not just chasing rainbows but studying how to find them. "Shap shap!" I say in some good township slang for 'cool' and pronounced with a suitably long Southern African 'A' for 'Arrrrrchitecture'. Architecture grades to meaning more than just what is built. For architecture, like community, is never about gold, but voice.

05 Thatched mud houses in a Lesotho village.

06 Small sheds spaced approximately 30 metres apart border the freeway.

07 Neighbourhood fencing in Johannesburg.

08 Students at Smith's masterclass present their thinking.

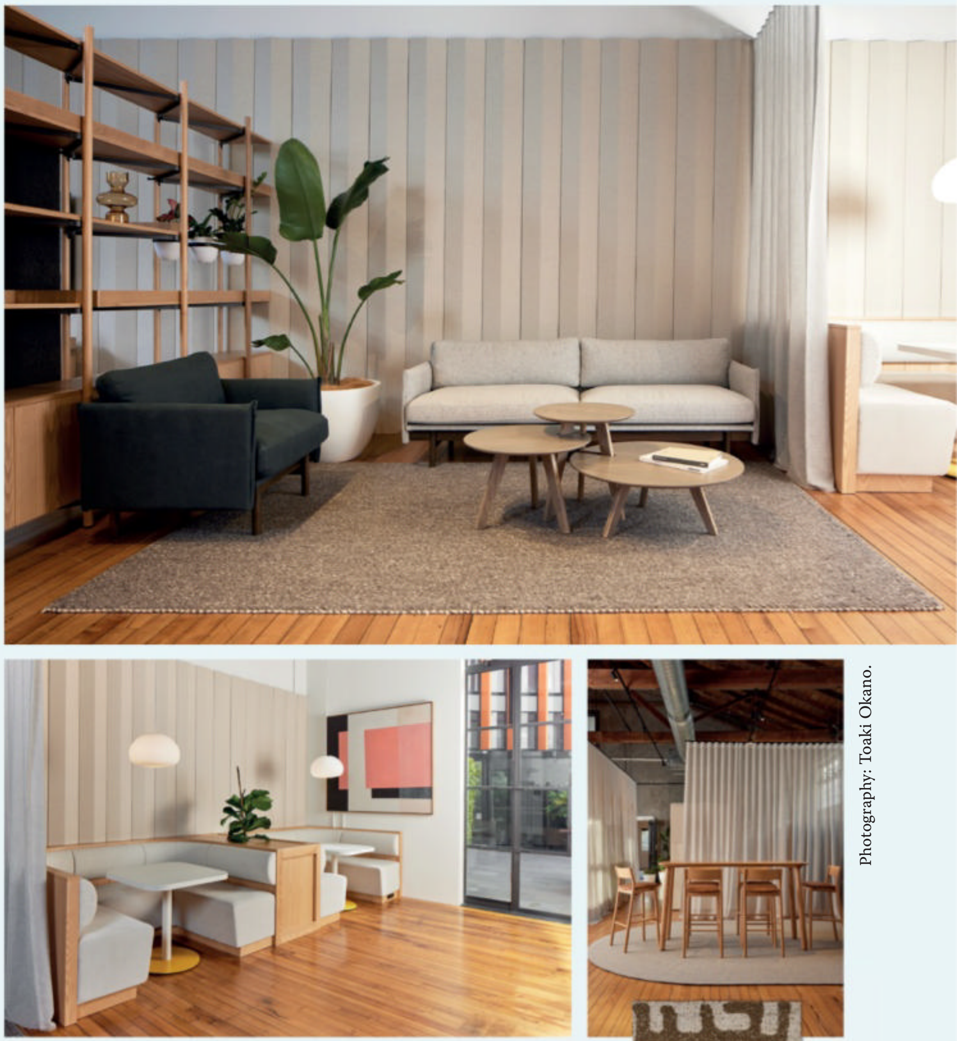
MATERIAL FOCUS: HARROWS EXPERIENCE CENTRE

Designwell creative director **Alexander Wastney** describes the careful balancing act of designing a space that is part showroom, part workplace and part hospitality venue.

What was your brief for this project?
Harrows is a family-owned New Zealand business, which designs and makes tailored commercial furniture "crafted for connection". The team wanted its new showroom to embody its ambition to be the champion of social spaces. Harrows' core customers – designers and architects – needed a space where they can inspire clients and experiment with diverse furniture solutions.

What was the thinking behind your design?
Our vision was to create an immersive customer experience where clients could easily transition between different social settings, and mix and match furniture items. Flexibility was key, not only to adapt to larger events but also to create functional zones for the sales team within the showroom, showcasing the versatility of Harrows' products. We also wanted to highlight the ways in which workplaces today are encouraging people back to the office with more residential and hospitality-feeling furniture, so there's a lot of emphasis on social connection throughout the space.

Did the site context impact your design?
The choice of the heritage-listed 1920s' Orange Coronation Hall in Auckland's Eden Terrace was deliberate. Its high ceilings, steel windows, native-timber flooring and spacious open hall provided the perfect canvas for the furniture. We needed a space that resonates across various commercial sectors, from workplace and hospitality design to education, healthcare and public spaces. The heritage status and lease covenants presented unique challenges – no internal walls and no attachments to floors, walls or ceilings – however, this limitation became an opportunity to highlight the adaptability of Harrows' furniture systems. We divided the space into various spatial typologies using strategic lighting, sheer curtains, shelving dividers and larger furniture systems to define areas.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Harrows' Verde three-seater sofa with smoke ash legs in Warwick Noyack Mist; Harrows' Karaka stools with Warwick Eastwood Tan seats; Harrows' booth seating backs in Warwick Ovis Ecru and bases in Warwick Copeland Pumice.

Photography: Toaki Okano.

Tell us about your choice of fabrics.
We used Warwick Fabrics extensively throughout this project because of their interesting textural choices, excellent colour range and availability. We really enjoyed designing the new booth seats using Warwick's Copeland Pumice, a soft, transitional upholstery plain with a host of technical characteristics. Ovis, a classic boucle, added textural interest for the backrests. The versatile Warwick Eastwood range, a leather-look fabric, was a perfect choice for the Karaka stools and Noyack, a multi-textured upholstery fabric, looked superb on the Verde three-seater sofa.

ABOVE Warwick fabric swatches: *Babylon Moss, Weave Rug Valencia Latte, Dubrovnik Taupe, Babylon Wheat, Mareeba Bark, Tiber Earth, Weave Rug Puglia Hemp, Dubrovnik Mocha and Dion Manuka.* Art direction by André Kini.

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Joining forces for good

The **2024 Gold Medal recipients Hugh Tennent** and **Ewan Brown** reflect on the 22 years of their collaborative architectural practice, steeped in kaupapa Māori and regenerative sustainability.

01

HUGH TENNENT

At the time of meeting Ewan in 2002, I had a couple of staff doing residential work, plus educational and spiritually focused projects. Prior to that, I had engaged with building in the middle of my architecture degree, pursued Buddhist meditative practices globally and worked for Structon Group. After travelling extensively, I designed and constructed the Buddhist Monastery in Stokes Valley in the early '90s. Whilst enjoying collaborations with colleagues – Bevin Slessor on Seatoun School and Spy Valley winery, and Jonathan Waddy on winery projects – I was quietly on the lookout to find someone to work with closely and grow the practice.

Ewan joined in 2003 with extensive experience in large commercial projects and skills I was lacking. We shared similar values in gravitating to projects that uplift people and community. Neither of us wanted to grow a practice just to be big, yet we wanted to do larger work. It didn't take long for me to realise it would be best to work together in collaboration…

Together, we have been practising for 22 years, creating work from a moderately sized office that has been able to make projects often above our scale. We have mutually supported each other to enable the strongest contribution to the work, the office and the built environment. Receiving the Gold Medal is confirmation that our differing yet complementary voices have developed with a synergy, making it clear the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

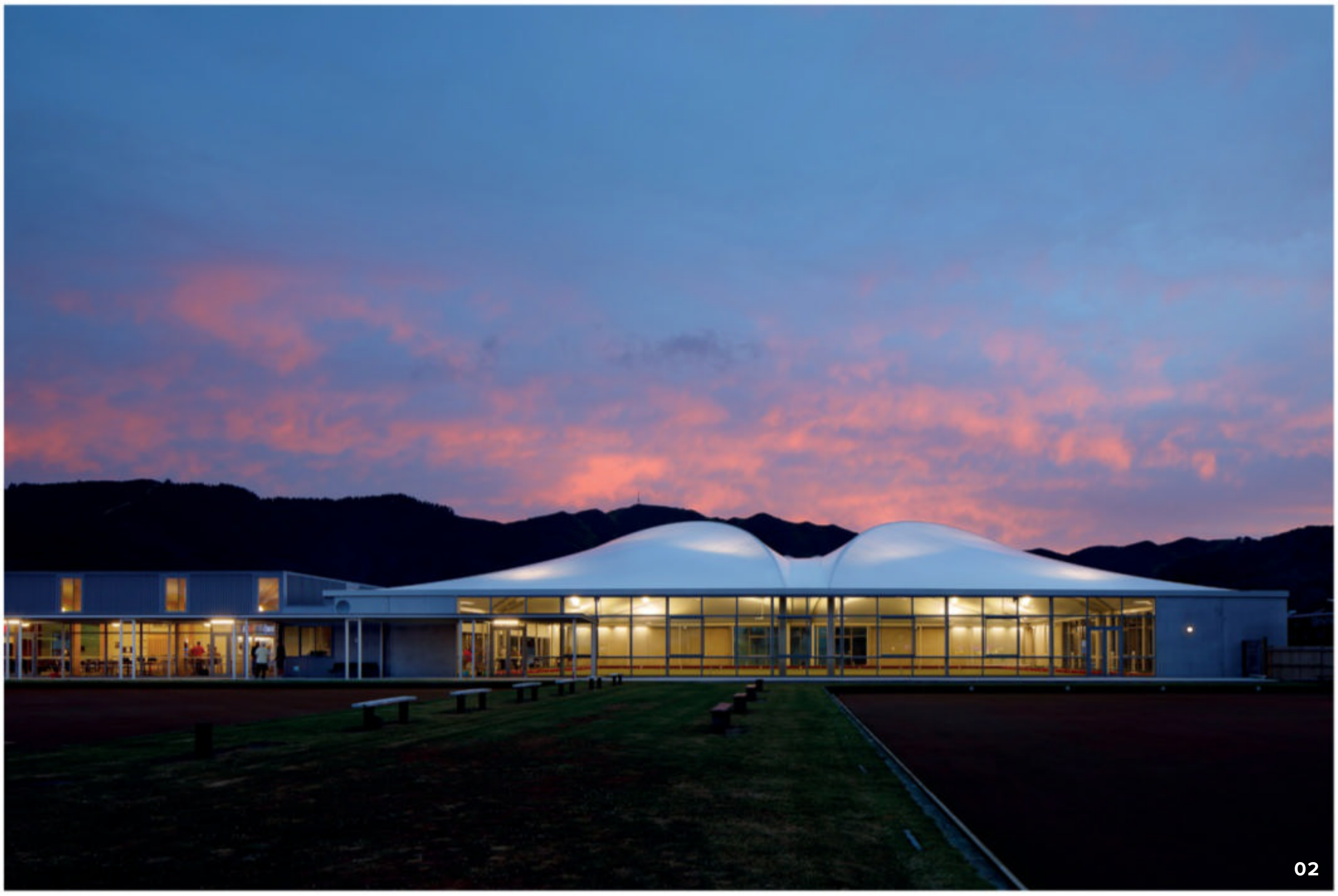
The work of the practice is characterised by seeking to uplift the human experience through engagement with the building and its ground, to be a positive force in its context and support its purpose.

My role is design director; Ewan is sustainability design director and managing director. Together, we are drawn to projects that benefit community in its many expressions, and in which we seek to influence the impacts of making on natural systems upon which our life depends.

There are common threads connecting the work: often, the use of timber in our wooded land, a warmth of habitation and enclosure, and an exploration of form which makes for a discernible character. These formal responses

01 Ewan Brown (left) and Hugh Tennent. Photo: Catherine Cattanach.

02 Naenae Bowling Club. Photo: Jason Mann.



are unique to each project, born from research and synthesising of the many facets to arrive at a central conceptual framework to scaffold the design journey. This conceptual basis can be expressive of many things: a cultural idea or story, an innovative structural approach, an extraordinary site and its geomorphology, and so on. Ideally, when complete, the project invites curiosity and response, and support and enjoyment for those who use it.

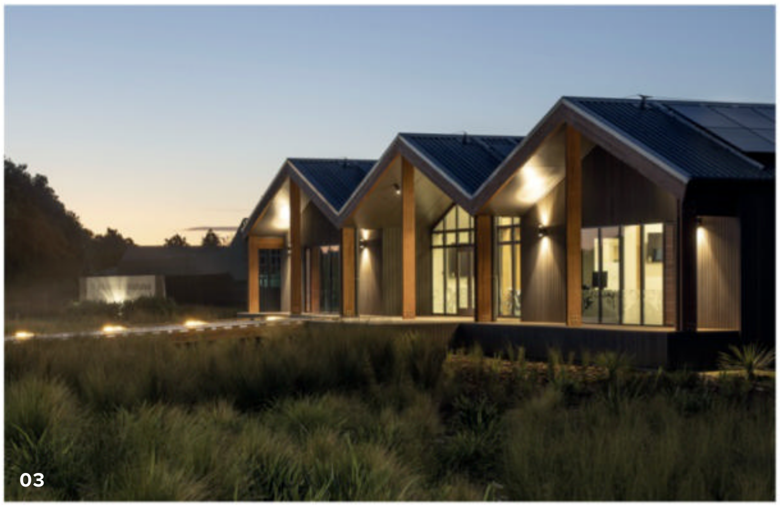
Adopting a fresh approach to each project often requires invention – one of the many joys and challenges of architecture. We have a team used to the unfamiliar yet which draws from much experience. The most recent significant project, Ngā Mokopuna for Te Herenga Waka Marae at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, has required much invention and innovation to respond to the dual aims of uplifting matauranga Māori at the university whilst undertaking the Living Building Challenge (LBC). For this project, Ewan's passion and unwavering commitment to the LBC has been a massive achievement, supported by many in our team.

This project exemplifies other major threads of our work: kaupapa Māori projects and the challenge of regenerative sustainability. We have been working on kaupapa Māori projects for 22 years and this journey has affected us both. From Pākehā backgrounds, we've woken up to the legacy of colonialism for Māori and been invited to contribute to the much-needed work of repairing, uplifting and rangatiratanga. For myself, this is an ongoing journey of te reo Māori, of listening and researching, of enjoyment, and of challenge and contribution. It is also a journey we have supported across the practice.

Designing for kaupapa Māori projects is a joy – the relationships and aspiration for the understanding that buildings have voice, the valuing of being kaitiaki and of collaboration.

03 Pā Reo, Te Moana o Raukawa, Ōtaki. Photo: Andy Spain.

04 Pā Reo, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, aerial view. Photo: Andy Spain.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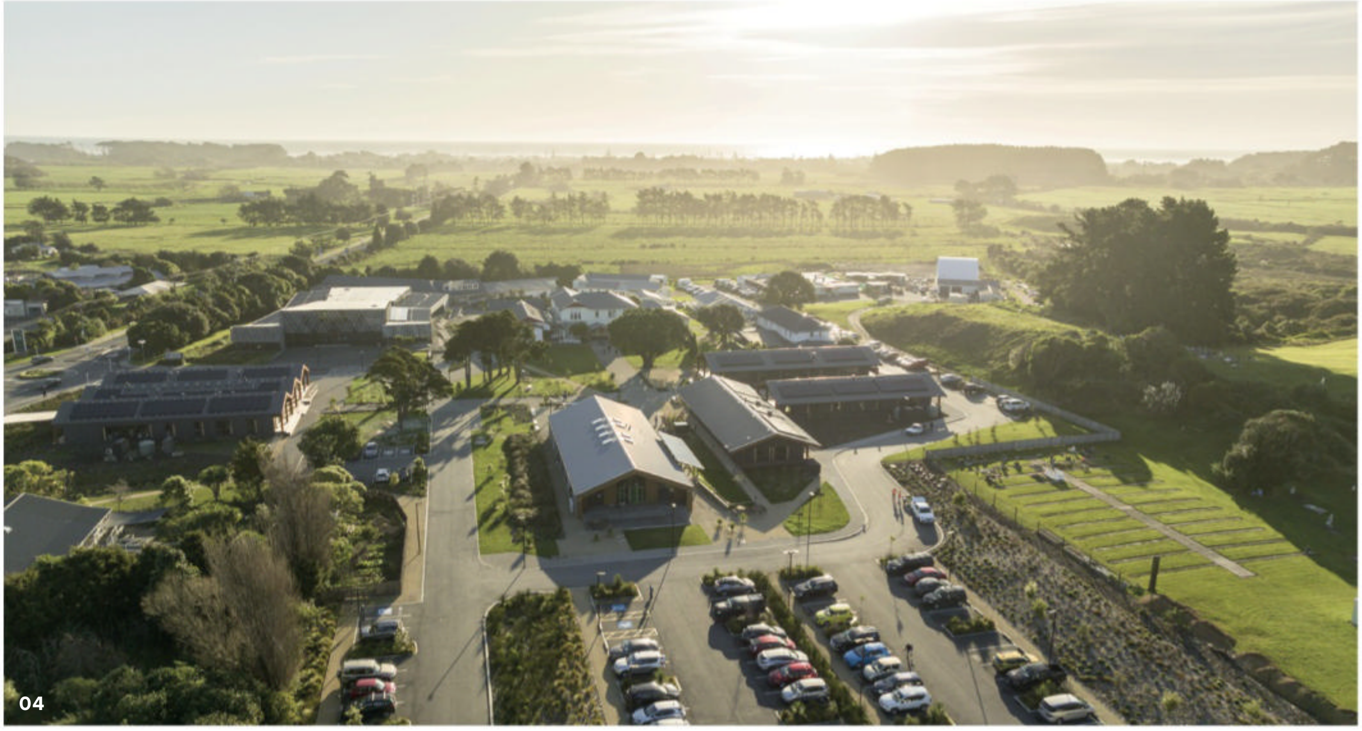
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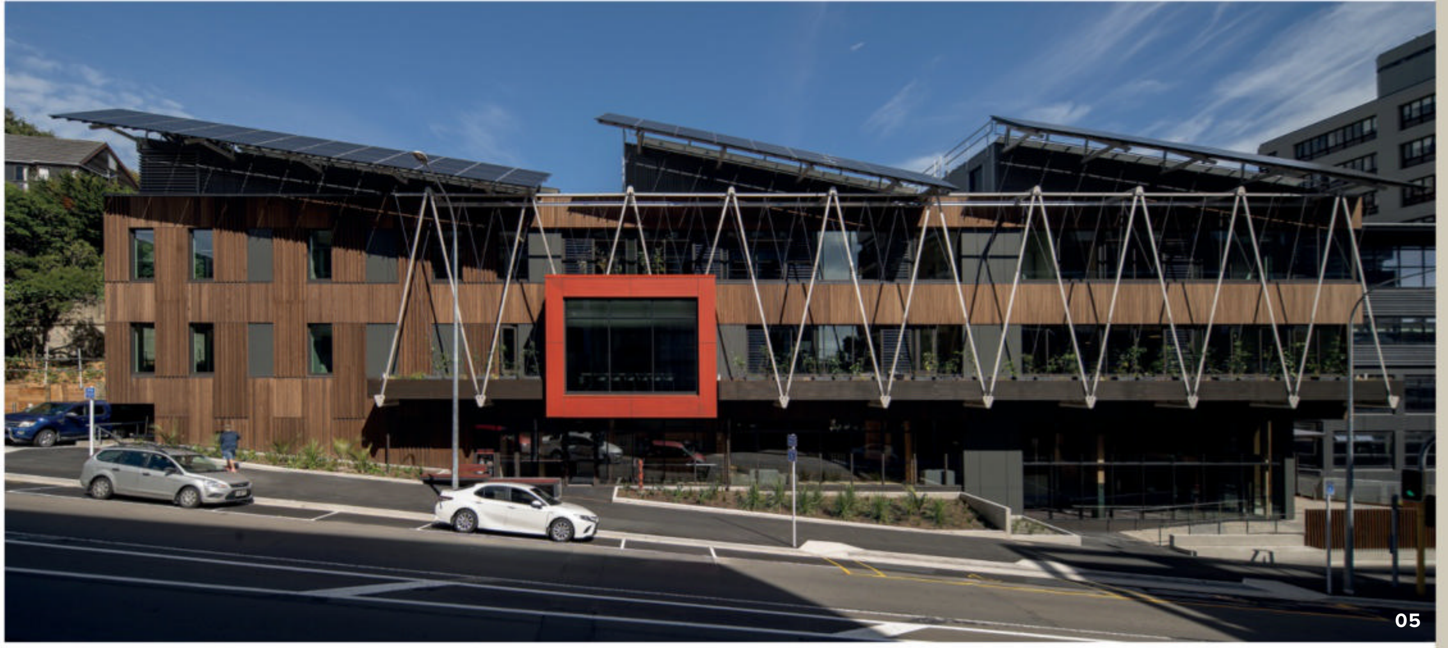
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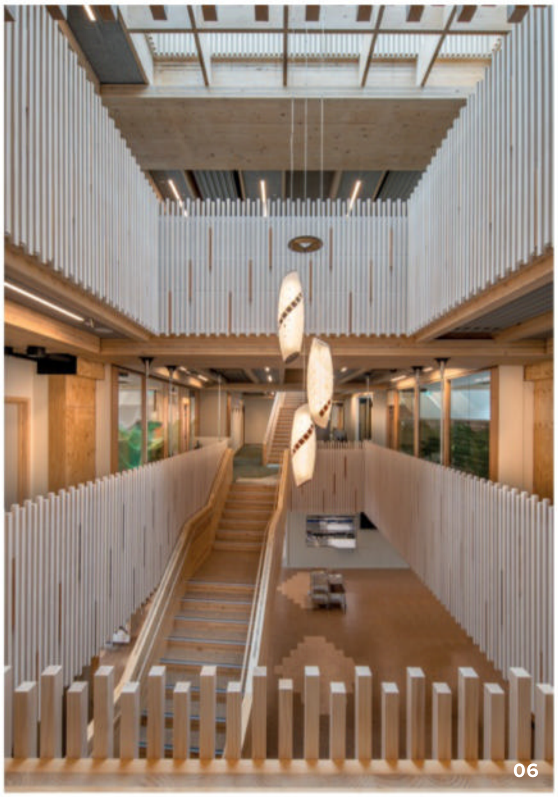
The mahi requires careful listening; it requires us to kōrero and to sing. Architecturally, each project initially appears as an apparent blank page but one that is suffused by moemoeā (vision), pūrākau (legend), whakairo (pattern) and whakapapa (lineage). Finding form that resonates is, at times, straightforward and, at times, an iterative exploration, and at its best through codesign.

Connection to te taiao, the natural world, is a central preoccupation: the recognition that our species is of nature but functioning so destructively. Sustainability is common sense but hard to do; expediency and profit have been given greater priority. LBC is thus compelling because it seeks to be regenerative but it requires a strong commitment to values. It is no coincidence that almost all LBC projects in Aotearoa are kaupapa Māori.

Architects are neophytes, looking for new challenges and invention. To do the larger work, we needed an office with great people and systems. The latter has largely been Ewan's design project, as with his stewardship of our LBC projects. This development has been significant and led to his ongoing contributions around carbon and sustainability within the broader building industry and design community.

The practice has grown with broad foundations, allowing it to weather ups and downs. We work across many building types, reflecting our team in the office: spiritually focused projects (churches, retreat centres, monasteries); large commercial projects, led by practice principal Kevin Lux; early childhood through to tertiary education; sport buildings; and kaupapa Māori projects of many varieties. This variety and the ongoing relationships with clients support our practice over time, in turn, allowing us to serve their kaupapa.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05–06 Ngā Mokopuna, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. Photos: Andy Spain.

EWAN BROWN

Hugh and I came from different backgrounds and met just before we joined forces. Hugh grew up across the country; I lived in Palmerston North. Hugh went to Auckland architecture school; I went to the Wellington school. Hugh worked for a while as a builder and my father was one – I spent school holidays working on building sites. Hugh went almost immediately into private practice while I worked for a few practices here and in Glasgow, Scotland, and gained a variety of experiences and scales of work.

I came to the practice with extensive experience in large commercial projects, having worked for JASMaD, Craig Craig Moller (CCM), with residential and commercial work, including Rutherford House, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education, the Chromie apartments and Wellington Airport redevelopment. The team environment for Wellington Airport was a life-changing experience and I was keen to create that type of team again. I had also been involved in social housing projects in Scotland from 1990 to 1993, and then came back to Wellington to work, like Hugh, at Structon before re-joining CCM.

Following a chance meeting in 2002 on the Wellington waterfront, we decided to join forces. Despite our different backgrounds, we found much in common, complemented each other's skills and evolved as we worked together.

We both wanted to build a design-led practice from the ground up, not compete in the mainstream, focus on less work and do it well, run a project from beginning to end, develop really good documentation and run it well on site, work to budget and programme (critical, in our view, for clients), and gain work by creating fans from satisfied clients.

You never know which will be that special job that will open doors or become the beginning of a journey across your career together. We were committed to architecture deeply rooted in culture, community and environment, and that first special project was Mana Tamariki, a kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa in Palmerston North. I bid for it the day before Christmas break, 2003, on the new GETS (government electronic tender service) website, having started only with Hugh in March that year. Neither of us had worked on a te ao Māori project but some of our education projects and Hugh's spiritually focused work resonated with them. We were given an interview and Hugh did a great sketch of a 'nest of learning' as a play structure for the kōhanga reo, which became part of the built project.

Mana Tamariki exemplifies our commitment to cultural expression in educational environments. The design reflects the principles of te ao Māori, creating a space where students can learn and grow in an environment that expresses their world view and fosters a sense of belonging.

This was a pivotal project for us, working with Bob Janhke as a te ao Māori consultant, learning about tapu and noa, and about expressing the

07 Our first kaupapa Māori project, Mana Tamariki, Palmerston North. Photo: Paul McCredie.

08 Te Ara a Tāwhaki, Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Photo: Andy Spain.

07

08

09

kaupapa of a building. It was not a wharenui, nor iwi-based; it was a building for a small, passionate team dedicated to the restoration of te reo. We could say only “kia ora” or “tēnā koutou tamariki mā” when in the learning environments of te reo Māori. We listened, learned and enjoyed the narratives the building wanted and needed to tell. It began our journey to learning te reo Māori and the kaupapa behind projects and communities.

It also began our sustainability journey together over the next 21 years. Hugh was known for this but it was not strong in my commercial experience. I now realise there was a core memory from growing up on a farm and becoming aware at 10 years old that we were almost self-sufficient.

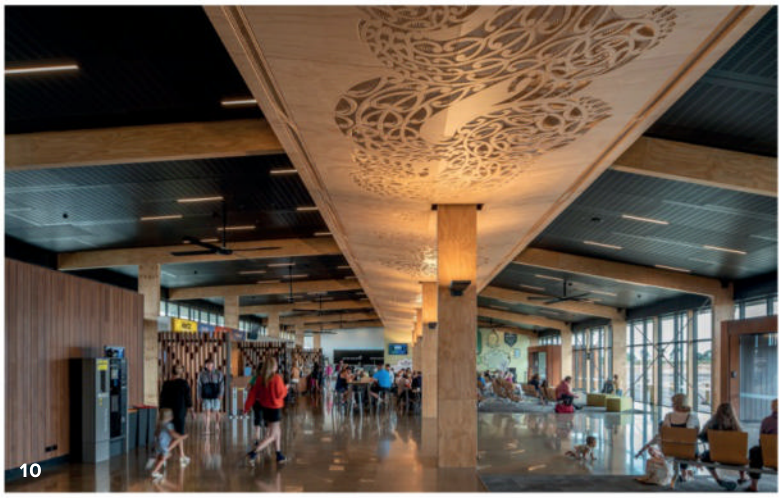
Following Mana Tamariki, we were invited to tender for Ngā Purapura, a health and well-being project for Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Several projects followed for the wānanga, including Whitireia (a temporary library), Te Ara a Tāwhaki (a new library, lecture theatre and student hub) and, most recently, Pā Reo campus. The last two of these projects are based on the LBC, today’s most advanced measure of regenerative sustainability in the built environment.

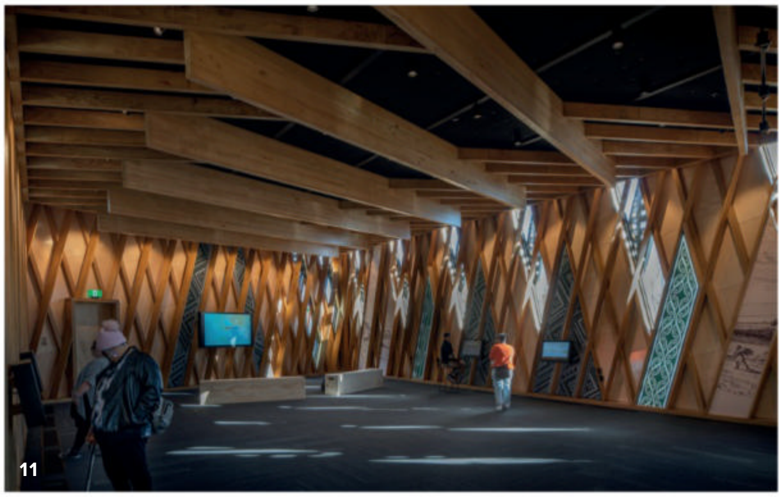
The ongoing relationship with the wānanga has been deeply rewarding and instructive, learning about community (whanaungatanga) and environment (kaitiakitanga). My journey has grown in understanding of kaupapa and manaakitanga, that all relationships in a project should be mana uplifting, and embrace kotahitanga, unity of purpose, and rangatiratanga, the qualities of leadership that all people at all levels can bring to the project.

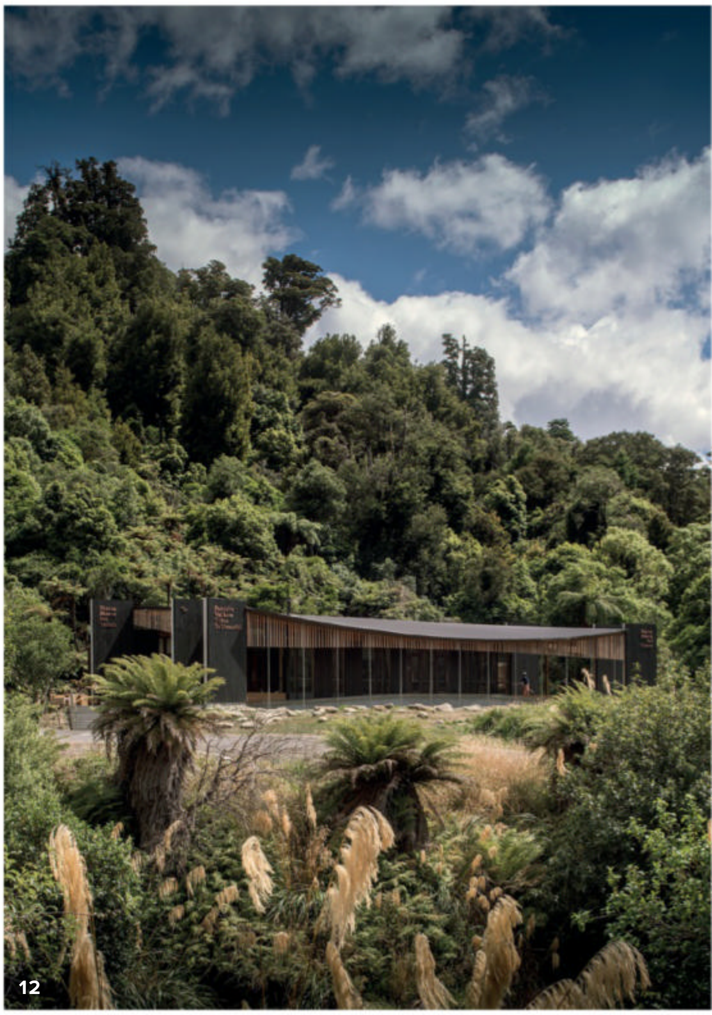
These kaupapa have changed me and the way I work. These projects have allowed us to explore architecture as a vehicle for cultural expression and environmental stewardship.

Other LBC-inspired projects include our work for Ngāi Tūhoe in Te Urewera – Te Kura Whenua, a new Visitor Centre at Waikaremoana, and Te Kura Tangata, a new town hub for Ruatāhuna. The LBC pushed us to go beyond conventional sustainability measures, to achieve regenerative design that gives back more than it takes from the environment, while honouring Tūhoe’s connection to the land.

09 He kākano, ‘a seed’: a reflective space at Ngā Purapura, Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Photo: Paul McCredie.







Nearby, at the Tairāwhiti Gisborne regional airport, we worked closely with Rongowhakaata. In Taranaki, we designed Te Whare Hononga, an Anglican Church project seeking reconciliation with Ngāti te Whiti of Te Ātiawa.

Advocating for the environment has been with us to start with, not forcing it on clients but ensuring it is brought forward and championed. People asked how we made clients do these projects but it was never like that. Clients asked for some aspects of sustainability and we would push them a bit further. It would work sometimes. There was a time when it was a fringe area of work and not mainstream but, now, everything has changed in that space and one of my biggest joys is that it is now accepted almost as business as usual, and seen as something companies looking to the future do.

We both became Green Star trained before Green Star even came to New Zealand. I helped write the first sustainability guidelines for Victoria University. Our work with Ngāi Tūhoe introduced us to the LBC and then through the advocacy of Jerome Partington. LBC is the most onerous and aspirational sustainability system in the world, and it covers every conceivable aspect of construction.

Learning about carbon on Ngā Purapura marked a significant milestone in our sustainability journey. It was the first time we started looking at reducing embodied carbon in a project. We reduced steel content and increased timber because all we knew at this time was steel had a high carbon content and timber sequestered, or had a low-to-negative carbon content. With Gisborne Airport, we began counting carbon, using Branz's LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) software – we saved 38.8 tonnes of carbon by replacing a couple of steel portals and all the roof steel purlins with timber.

10 Tairāwhiti Gisborne regional airport. Photo: Andy Spain.

11 Te Whare Hononga, New Plymouth. Photo: Andy Spain.

12 Te Kura Whenua for Ngāi Tūhoe at Waikaremoana. Photo: Andy Spain.

The built environment is responsible for around 40 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions – as architects, we have a responsibility to drive towards carbon neutrality by 2050. Living Buildings must meet seven key performance areas: water, energy, health, happiness, materials, equity and beauty. Rather than extracting from the environment or being neutral, Living Buildings are designed to return and regenerate resources actively, to enhance mauri ora, the vitality of the ecosystem and society within which it is sited.

LBC has taken us into all aspects of sustainability in construction. It is intense and it feels impossible until it's done. After five projects – number four was Pā Reo and number five Ngā Mokopuna – we have almost completed two fully certified LBC projects. There are only 32 in the world.

A satisfying thread of our work has been evolving the office itself: a design project on its own. Over the course of 22 years, we have had 57 staff, with 15 currently. We've learned how to create a small, high-performing team where everyone in the team has a hand in drawing up a project and all are responsible in making sure it is as good as possible. The same happens on site and the goal is to meet the budget and the programme. It's not always achieved but, generally, it has allowed us to leave a project with a happy client. This has enabled us to work on large-scale projects, with the ASB Sports Centre (Ākau Tangi) being a very big first step in large commercial projects, which we have found enjoyable.

The team has also grown in diversity. LBC introduced us to the JUST programme in 2017. At this time, the Diversity Agenda formed and I was a founding signatory. We then became New Zealand's first B Corp architects in 2022.

The Gold Medal award reflects the whole of our practice, as two architects working together over time, with a developing sense of purpose and contribution.

Tennent Brown has had a small, stable team for the past few years, "having fun and working hard": Kevin Lux (principal), Maurice Pipson (senior associate), Brenda Solon (senior associate), Julie Cook (associate), Yiwen Seow (associate), Clayton Viljoen (associate), Chloe Coles (architect), Sam Gwynn (architect), Devo Staples (architect), Caitlyn Lee (graduate and LBC materials researcher), Steve Borgonje (senior technician), Chris Blanch (senior technician) and Sarah Dee (office manager, accounts).

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LORRAINE O'ROURKE

Specialising in high-end residential and commercial projects, **Lorraine O'Rourke Interiors** enriches its work with storytelling, art and honest materiality.

What led you to a career in spatial design?
The seed was always there. I grew up in Dublin, where streets of identical exteriors pushed my folks to be creative with the interiors. It instilled the sense that a home is something that is made and crafted, and I loved nothing more than rearranging my childhood home, despite the '70s' Axminister carpet. Attending a convent school, I had to choose between Art and Science, so I studied Art History outside of school; this ultimately led to my career in design. After completing a four-year course that spanned spatial design, furniture-making and business studies, I was fortunate to graduate at a time when construction in Ireland was at an all-time high. I walked straight into a dream job in Dublin, designing for high-end hotel and workplace projects in both Ireland and the United States. I often think of that first job and the opportunities that I was given – they sent me to the US for site visits and to the Milan Fair for inspiration – and I'm eternally grateful.

Are you influenced by any designers or movements?
Mid-century modernism is a key influence. There is a seamless synergy between the building envelope and the interior; it's my experience that the most successful projects are those that take this holistic approach from the start. I've long admired the works of Lina Bo Bardi, Oscar Niemeyer, Alberto Giacometti and Barbara Hepworth, to name a few; visiting the Maeght Foundation in Provence was a highlight. With time as our new luxury, I'm certainly drawn to the more human-centric interiors and the ideals of Ilse Crawford and Patricia Urquiola. In my own work, narrative and sense of place are key influences.

How does colour factor into your projects?
Colour is an integral part of my work. I generally start with a neutral base and layer in colour and handcrafted texture, and, lately, I've been experimenting more with soft-toned, saturated schemes. Spaces give energy and colour can direct how that will feel. In one of our current projects, a heritage villa, we are colour-drenching the teens' bedrooms in Resene Quarter Malta and Resene Quarter Cashmere, respectively. We removed the lowered '90s' ceilings and reinstated the 3.5m-high ones with imperial mouldings and bespoke plaster detailing. We've played with the matt and gloss levels, creating a beautifully calm and contemporary leaning to a traditional home.

How did you arrive at the design of this collab?
Sculpture embodies art so beautifully. Inspired by English artist Barbara Hepworth's figurative, sinuous sculptures, we looked at the concept of stacking forms, negative and positive space, shadow play, texture and the overlay of its narrative.

Tell us about your colour choices.
I always start with building an inspiration board – it encourages me to flesh out the narrative and also to experiment with different colour combinations and textures. It creates the backbone of the space and something to refer back to as the project develops. The initial inspiration came from a landscape image with a painterly quality that was at once invigorating and calming. I drew out the colours from this, creating a sculpture with Resene Hinau and Resene Wavelength on the sinuous top piece, and Resene Raptor and Resene Half Raven on the base block. Resene Raptor also brought a warm, soft tone to the backdrop, using a dry brush application technique.

Resene
Raptor

Resene
Hinau

Resene
Wavelength

Resene
Half Raven

THIS PAGE
Resene Raptor, Resene Hinau, Resene Wavelength and Resene Half Raven. Creative direction and photography by Thomas Cannings.

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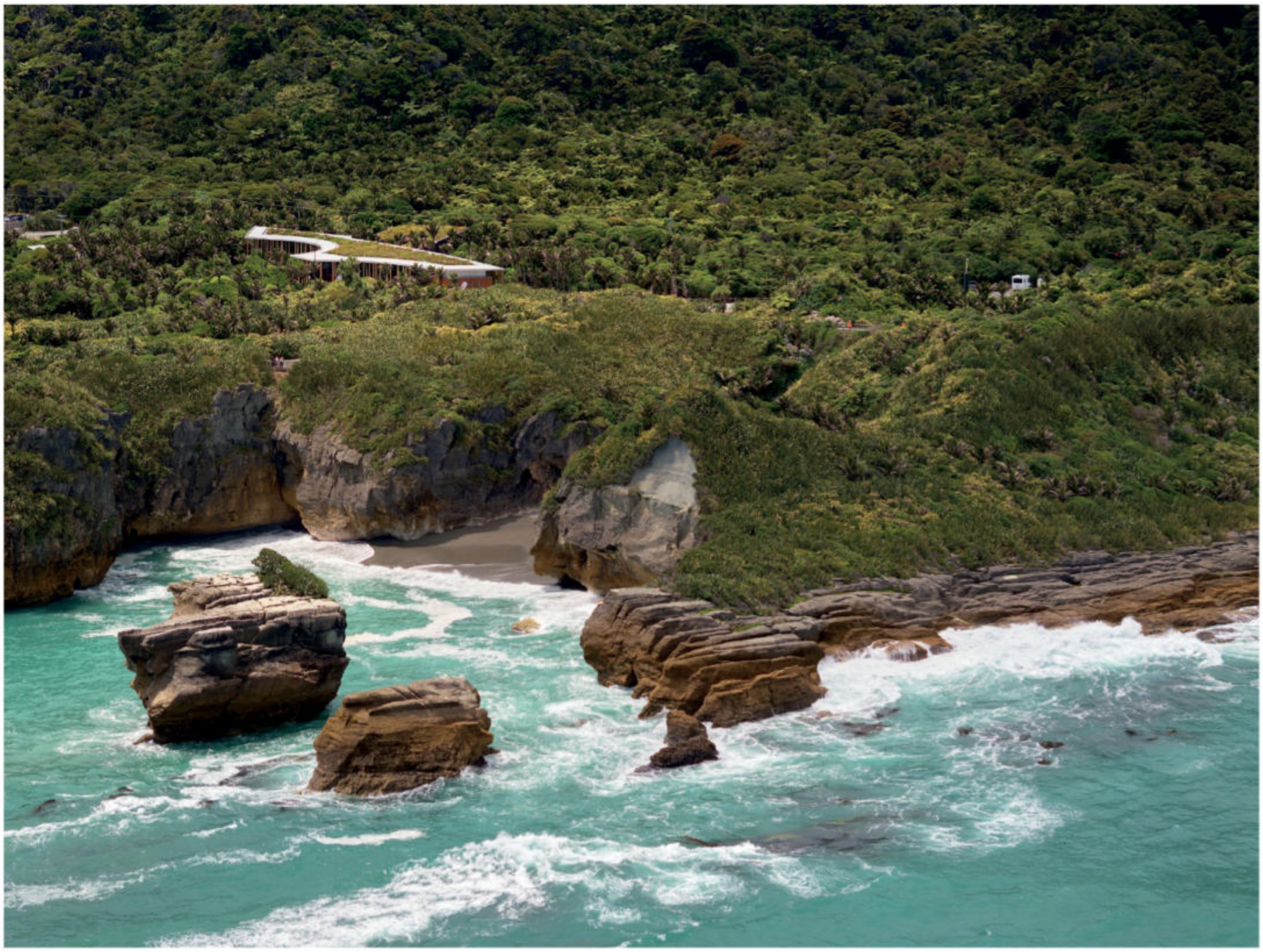


Punangairi. Photograph: Jason Mann.

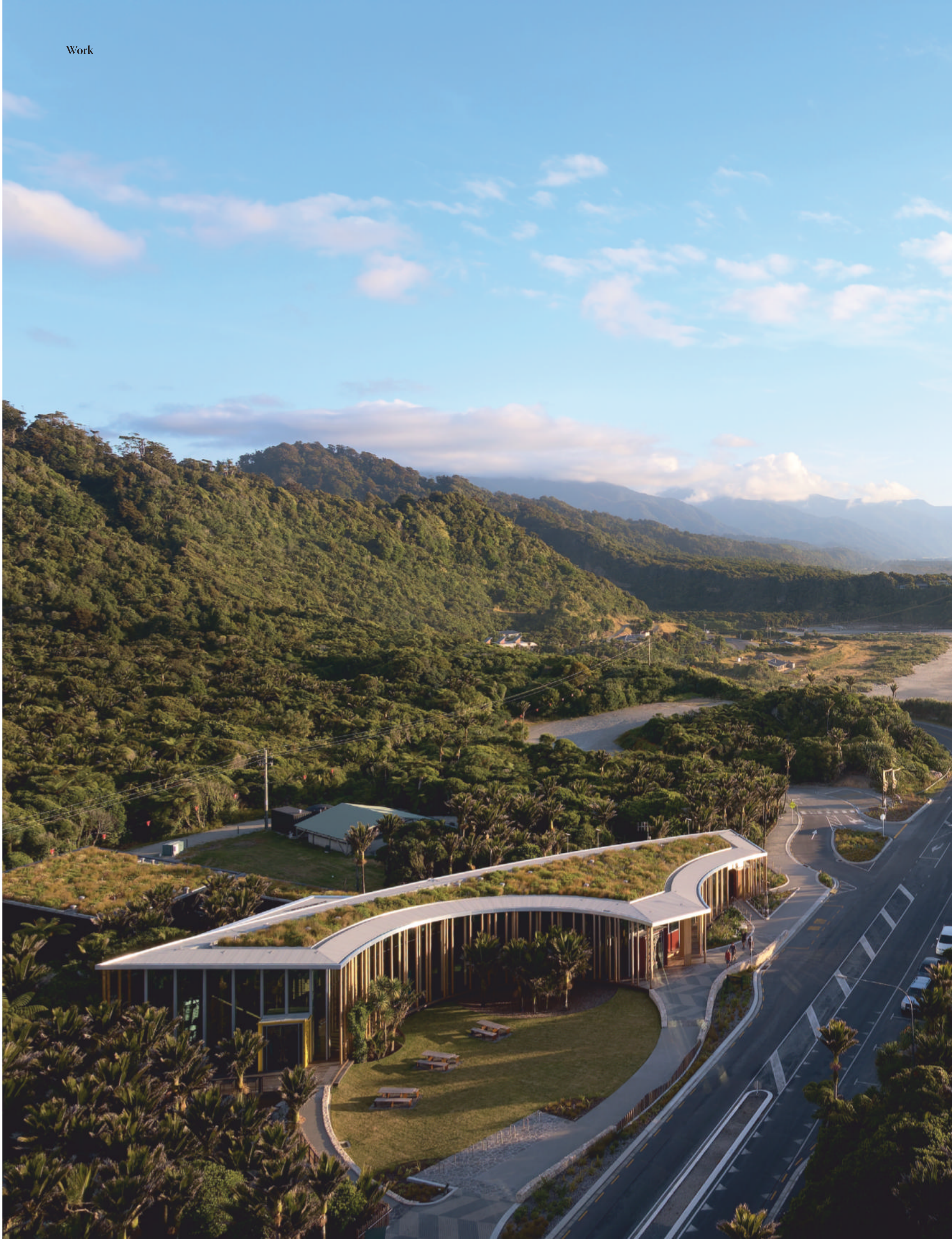
Work

Dancing around the dolines – Punangairi | Sheppard & Rout — p.46

A crack in the façade – Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery | Warren and Mahoney — p.58

Living in the laboratory – Hills Residences | Edwards White Architects — p.68

Grappling with the grid – Catalina Bay Apartments | Architectus — p.78

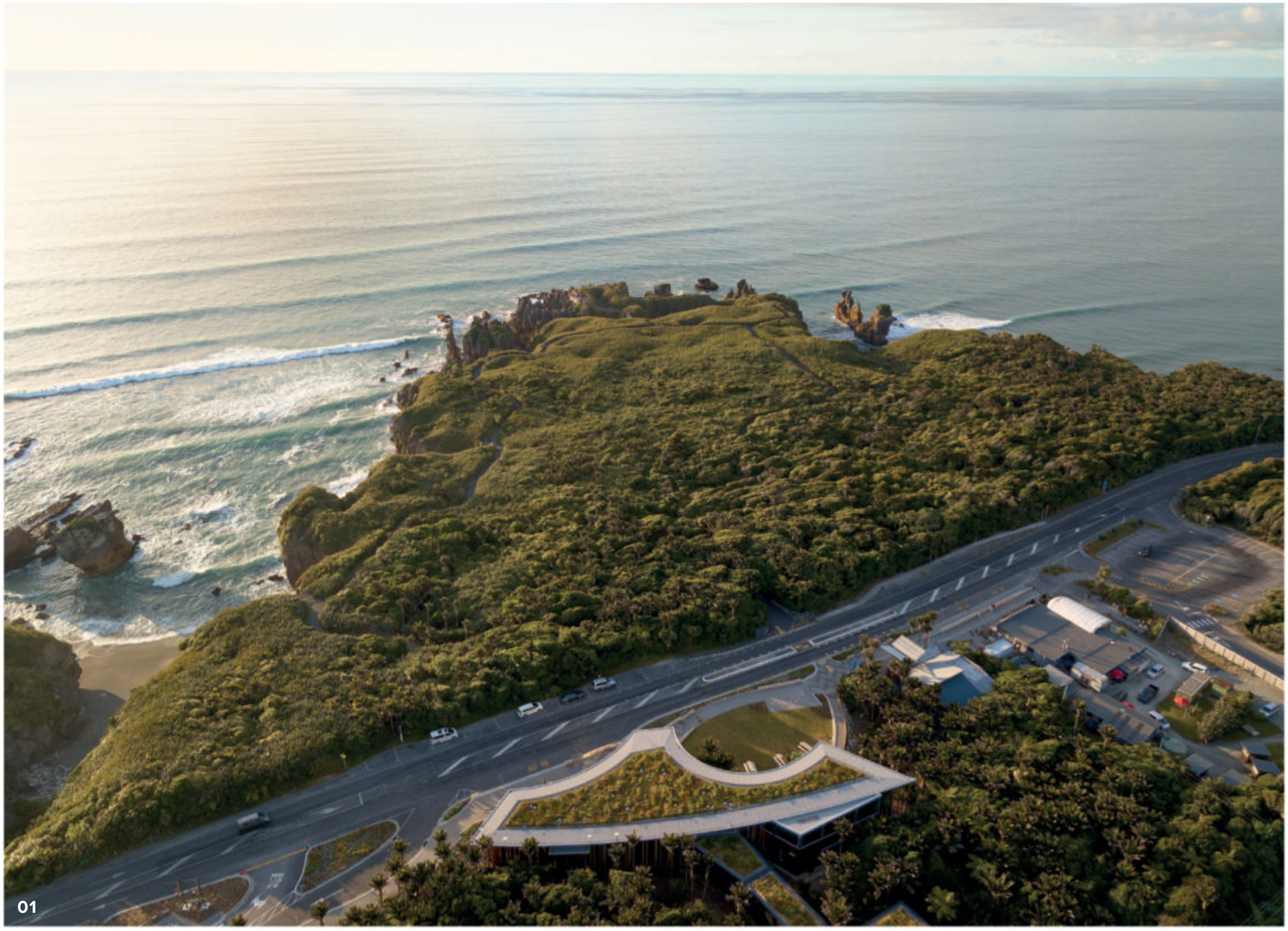


Dancing around the dolines

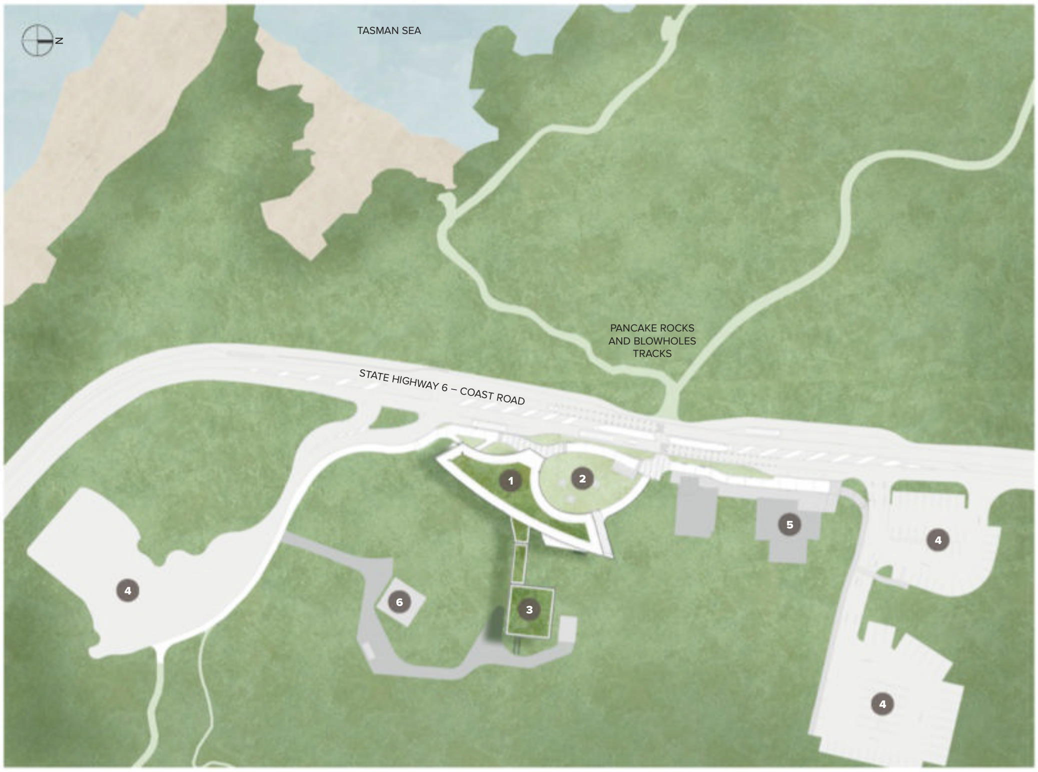
Matthew Webby visits the spectacular **Punangairi**, the new visitor centre in **Paparoa National Park** on the northern West Coast of the South Island by **Sheppard & Rout**.

Photography
JASON MANN

LEFT Punangairi sits nestled in the lush bush of Paparoa National Park.



01 The deep-green tones of the living roof match those of the surrounding bush.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TASMAN SEA
PANCAKE ROCKS AND BLOWHOLES TRACKS
STATE HIGHWAY 6 – COAST ROAD
1
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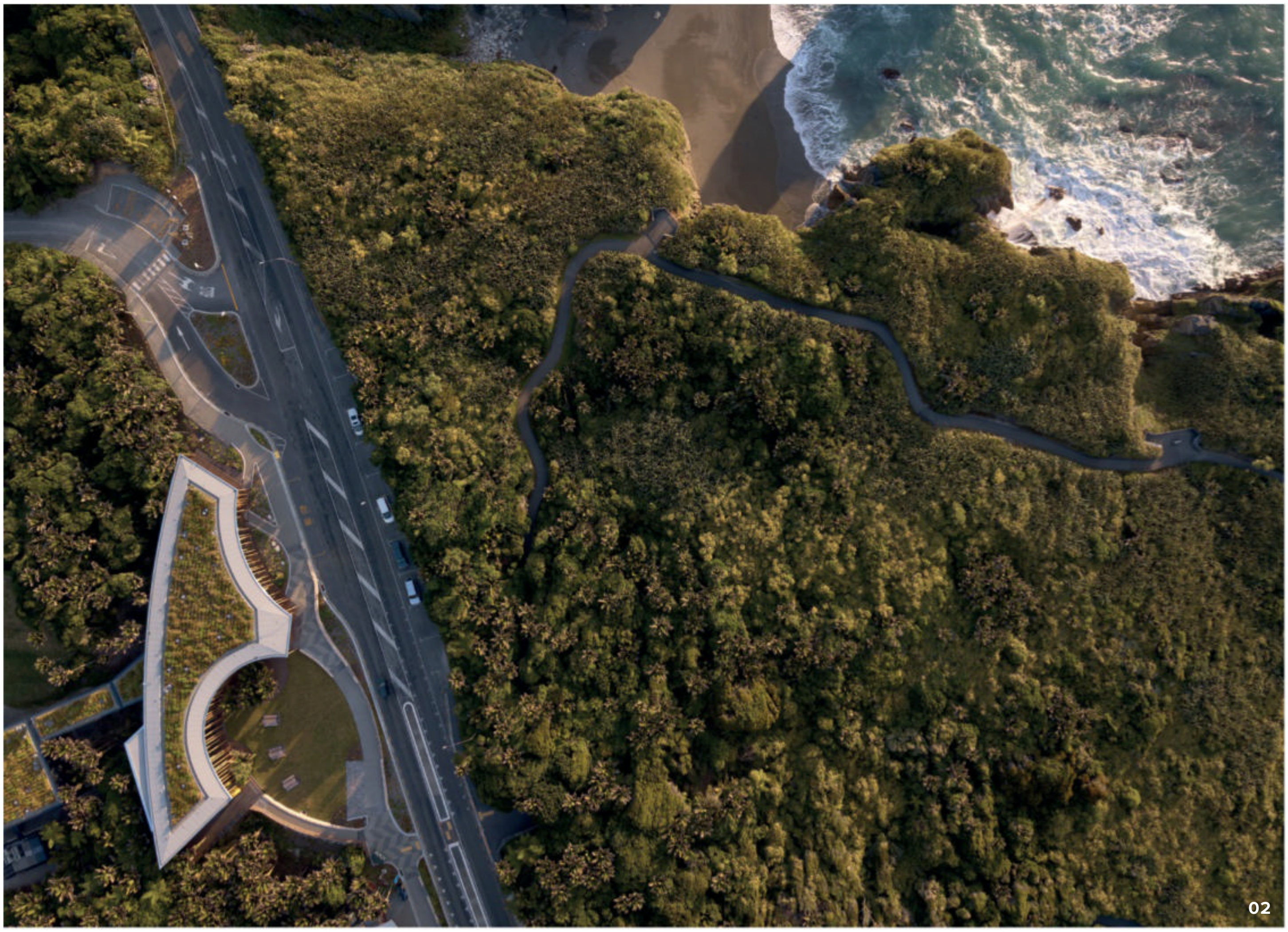
SITE PLAN

1 PUNANGAIRI
2 LAWN
3 PAPAROA EXPERIENCE
4 CAR PARK
5 EXISTING COMMERCIAL/RETAIL
6 SERVICES



02 The curved plan, emphasised by the articulation of the barge, mirrors shapes in the landscape.

EVEN IN OUR IMAGE-SATURATED WORLD, the aerial photos of Punakaiki's new visitor centre Punangairi are undeniably spectacular. Nestled within the subtropical rainforest of Paparoa National Park and topped by a living roof, Sheppard & Rout's design both blends into and contrasts with the natural surrounds of Dolomite Point and the nearby Pancake Rocks like a spaceship in camouflage.

The journey to Punakaiki from both the north and the south winds along a coastline of raw nature. As you round the bend into Dolomite Point, your first glimpse of Punangairi is a forest of vertical columns set amongst established nīkau, topped with a slim aluminium-clad barge. Peeking over the top of this glistening barge are the hints of the green roof so visible in aerial photography, with nīkau and the bush-clad hills beyond.

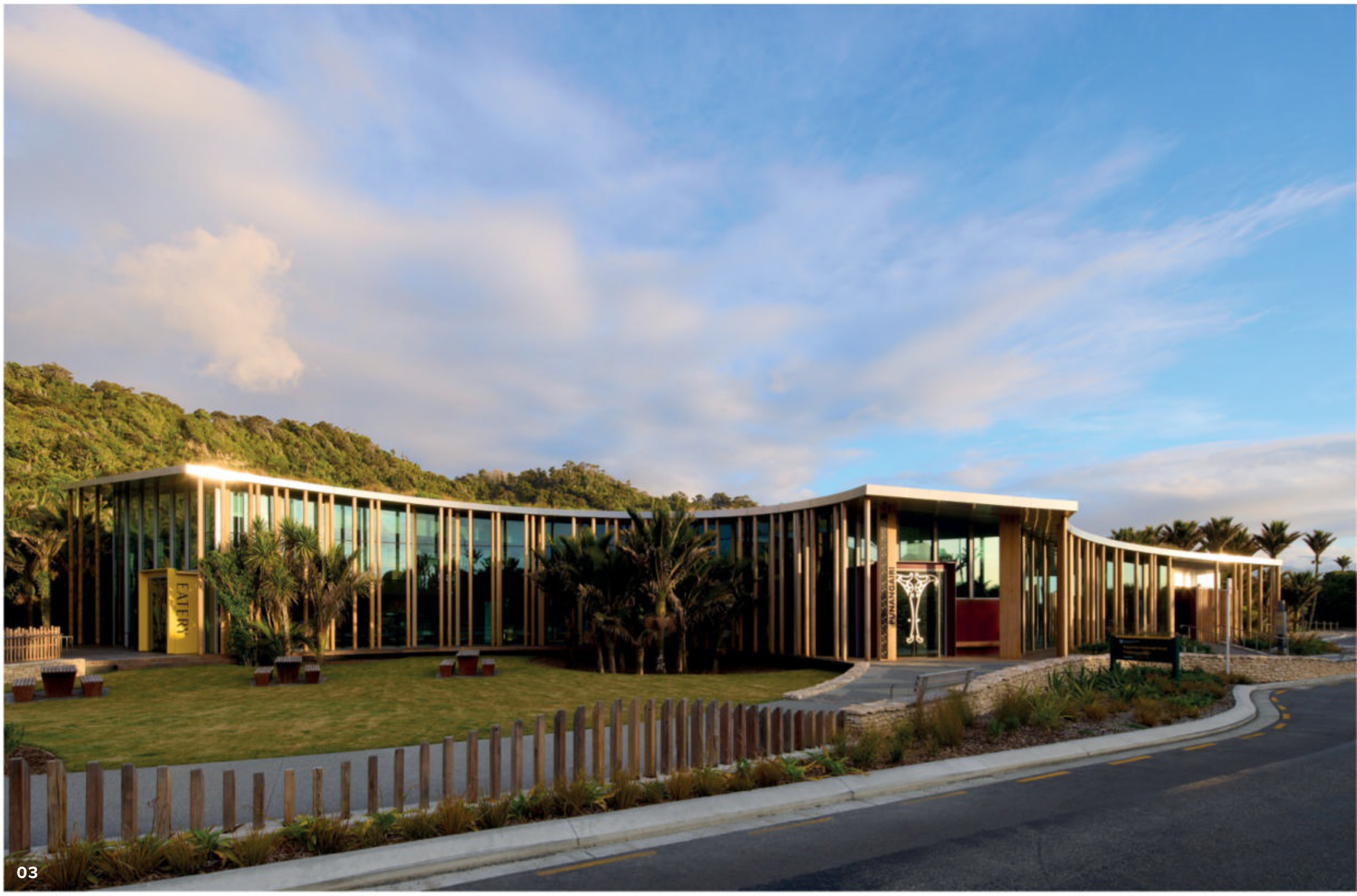
Punangairi – named to correct the misspelling of Punakaiki that has perpetuated since the mid-1800s[1] – is a visitor centre shared by local rūnanga Ngāti Waewae and the Department of Conservation (DOC) to welcome the estimated half-million annual visitors to the Pancake Rocks and surrounds. While various Paparoa National Park visitor centre designs have been prepared and shelved over recent decades, this project was initiated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, who had a desire to host manuhiri and share their stories. Together, the partners secured funding from the Provincial Growth Fund in 2018, alongside broader tourism initiatives at Dolomite Point. With this funding in place, the project was awarded to Christchurch-based Sheppard & Rout to continue earlier work undertaken by Boffa Miskell and Tennent Brown Architects.

Jasper van der Lingen of Sheppard & Rout explains that the original brief called for a 1200m^2 building sited in place of the significantly smaller original Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre and extending over the surrounding virgin bush. An adjacent flat lawn used extensively by visitors was viewed as sacrosanct and was to remain untouched.

On a visit to this former visitor centre, van der Lingen notes that they were struck by the view out the back-

REFERENCE

[1] thepress.co.nz/nz-news/360516822/punakaiki-or-punangairi-name-we-have-all-got-wrong



03 A timber colonnade, referencing the surrounding nīkau, faces onto State Highway 6.

04 The northern deck extends over the doline, allowing visitors to engage with the surrounding landscape.

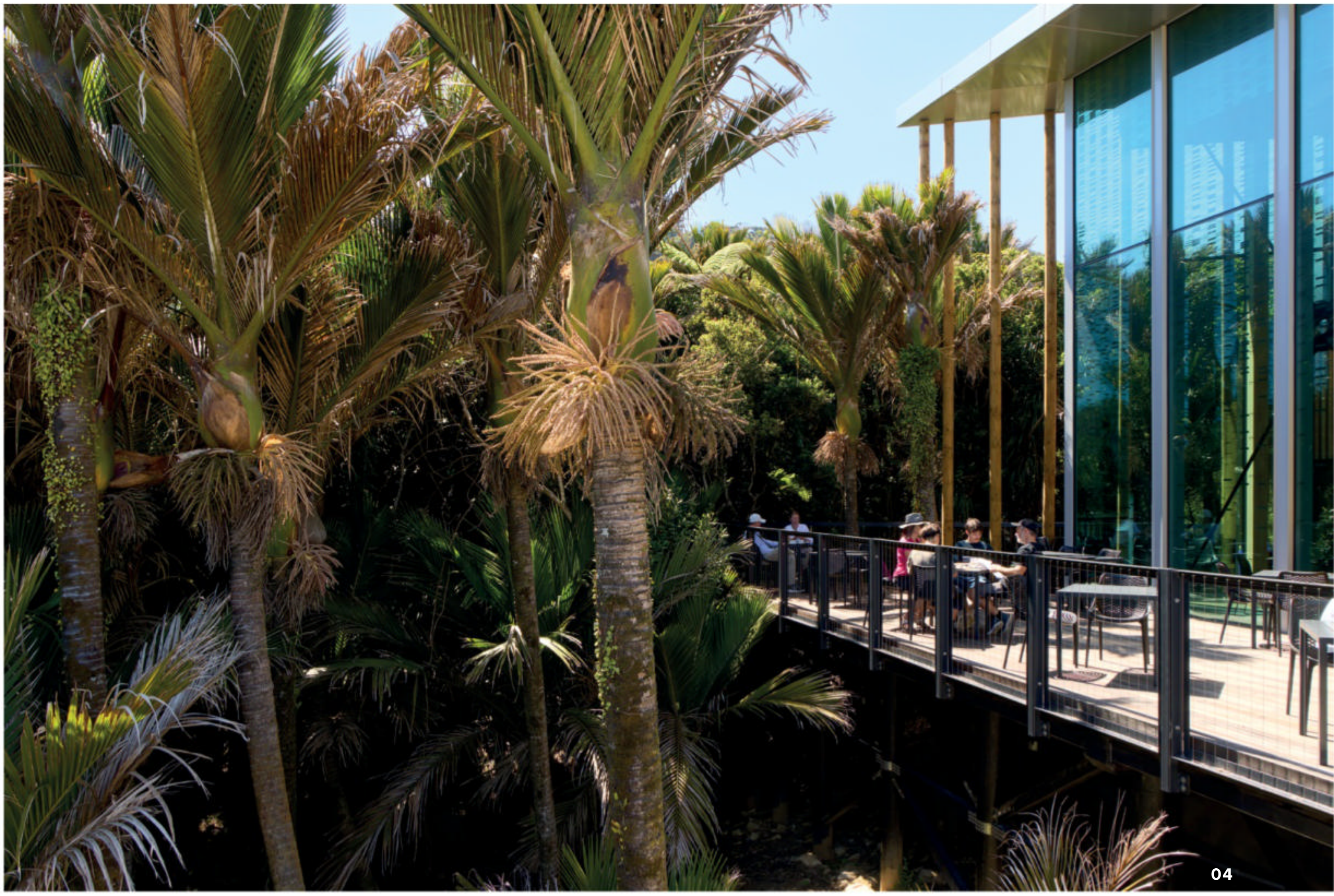
office window into the crowns of adjacent nīkau. While the visitor centre was firmly grounded at the road edge, this view into fronds and not trunks was the result of the landscape dropping steeply away below the centre into a doline or tomo. The wider landscape is pitted with these dolines infilled with dense bush.

With a desire to minimise the impact on the surrounding virgin bush, Sheppard & Rout challenged the briefed requirements and proposed to build upon the available open and flat space – the treasured lawn. Dancing around the edges of the surrounding dolines, the curved plan of the visitor centre emerged. This move responded to pragmatic considerations, such as enabling the DOC Visitor Centre to remain in operation while the new complex was constructed and not needing to infill or build over the deep hollows of the dolines. Also, it allows visitors to look out into the established bush and understand better the landscape they are inhabiting.

As you enter through the steel-clad wind lobby, you are greeted by the warmth of a timber-filled interior, with light entering from all sides. The layering of nīkau, external colonnade, glulam columns and steel cross-bracing filters the light; above, the gently lifting ceiling of timber dowel provides a sense of shelter and warmth. Paving patterns by Kamo Marsh and artworks by Fayne Robinson (Kāti Māmoe, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Apa Ki Te Rā Tō, Ngāti Porou), such as the sweeping stainless-steel pull-handles on the entrance doors, provide some reference to Ngāti Waewae's involvement in the building but the overarching architecture is not responding to a specific cultural narrative nor is it informed by co-design.

At a shared counter, both DOC rangers and hosts from the Paparoa Experience (by Ngāti Waewae) receive manuhiri, with retail similarly shared throughout the open floor plan. The roof lifts to the north, where a café and upstairs meeting space open out into views of the nīkau crowns, while the all-important public toilets are located to the south and accessible 24 hours a day.

The full programme was not able to be accommodated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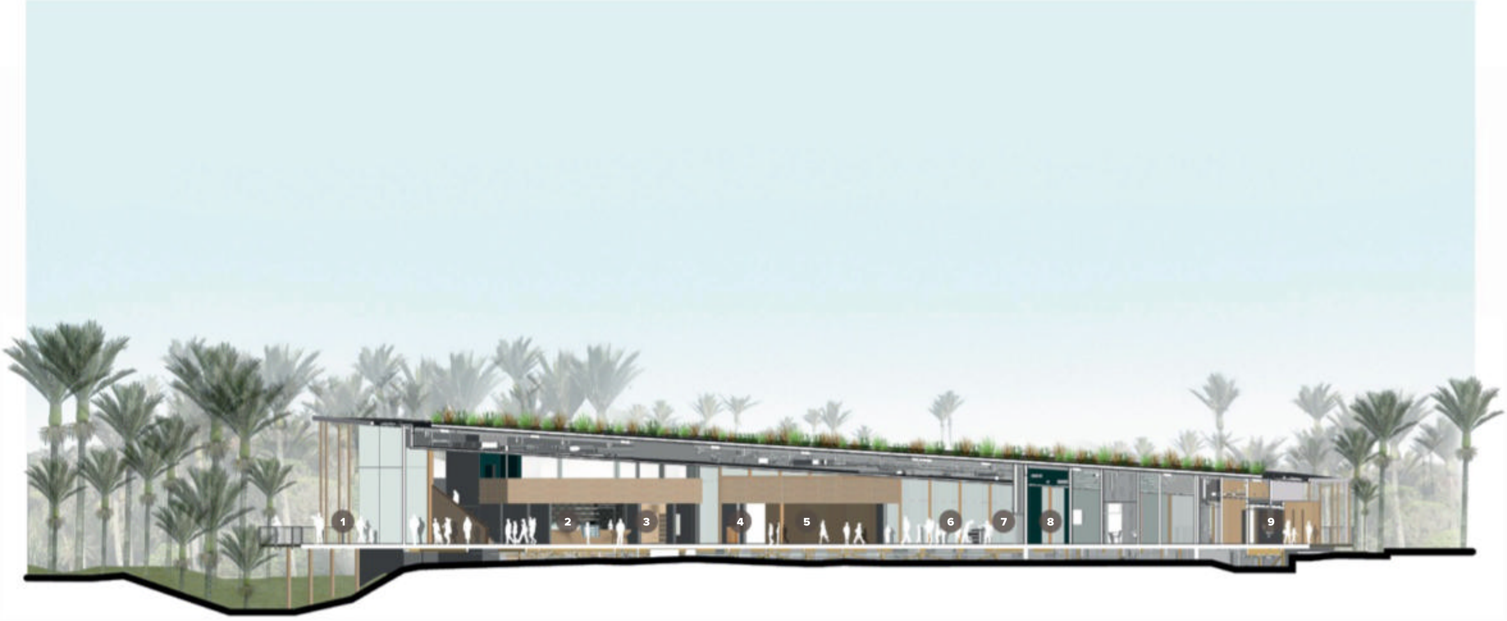
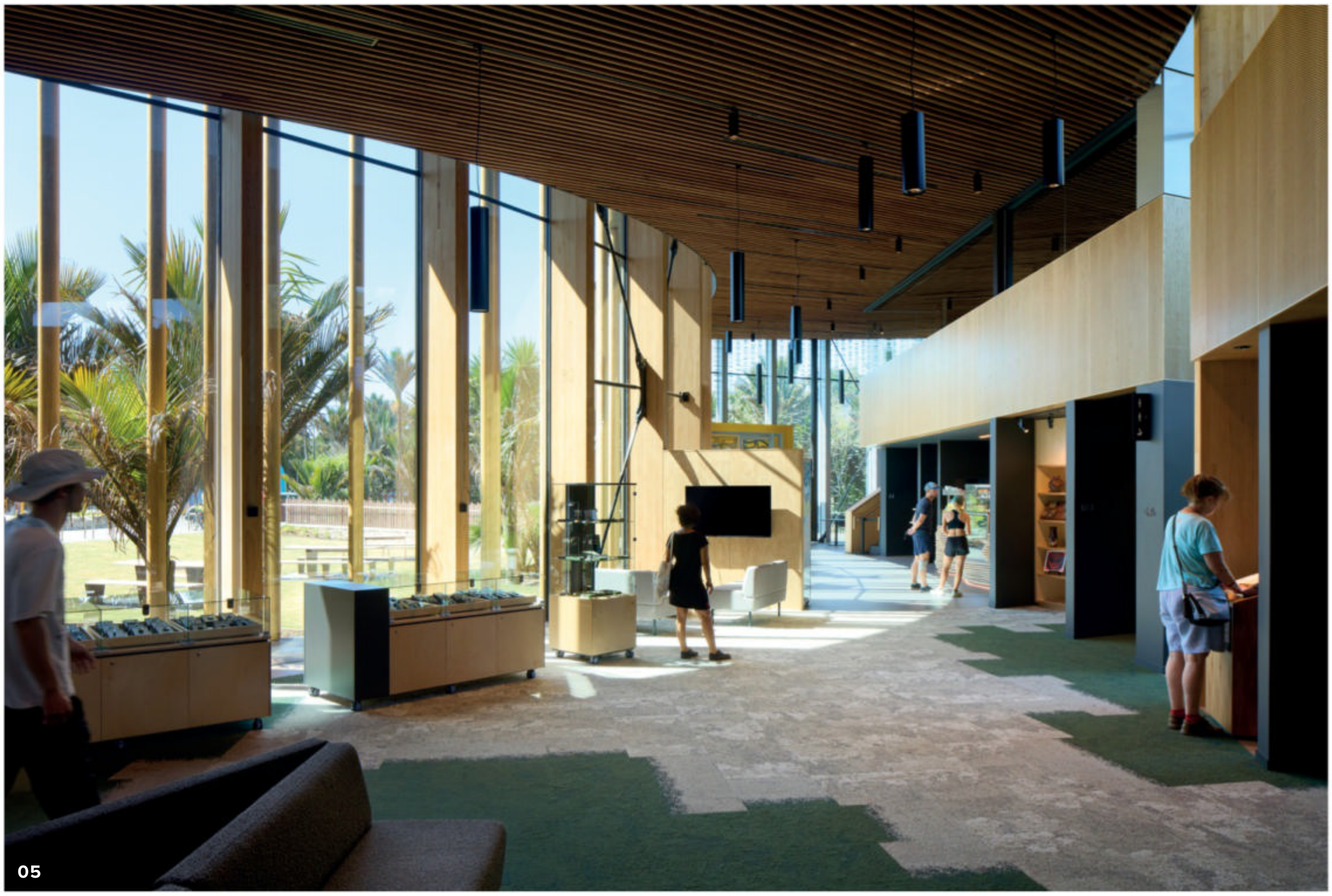


LONGITUDINAL SECTION

1 CAFÉ DECK
2 CAFÉ
3 COMMUNITY RETAIL
4 EXHIBITION ENTRY
5 NGĀTI WAEWAE RETAIL
6 DOC RETAIL
7 RECEPTION COUNTER AND BOOKINGS
8 OFFICE
9 PUBLIC TOILETS



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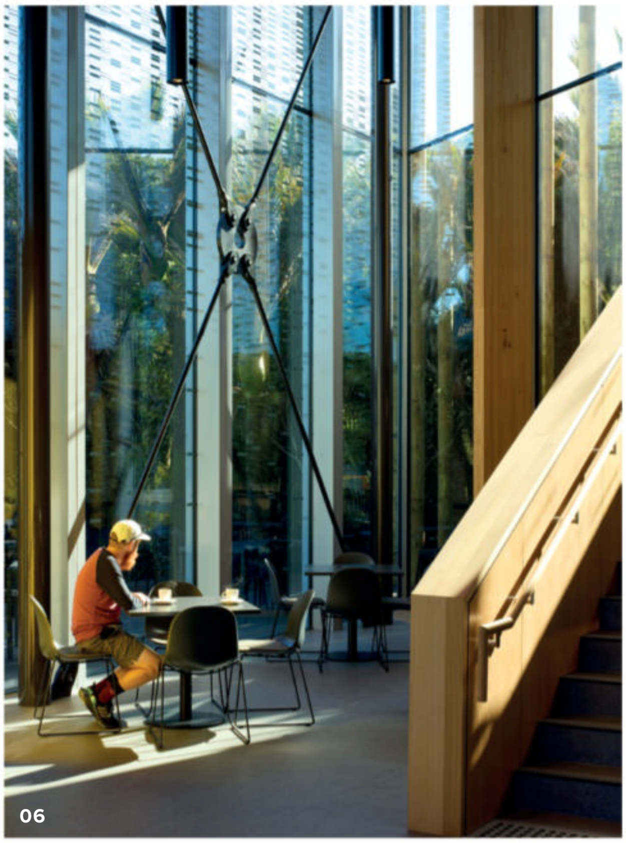
within the curved form, and so, via an air-bridge-type structure, the building extends to the east of the main building to an existing clearing where a green-roofed black box containing Paparoa Experience is housed. While the purpose of this space is to explain the history and geology of the Paparoa National Park through a Ngāti Waewae lens, at the discretion of exhibition designers Gibson Group, windows along the bridge have been covered. This disconnects visitors from the actual surrounding context of bush, dolines and manu that would otherwise be visible.

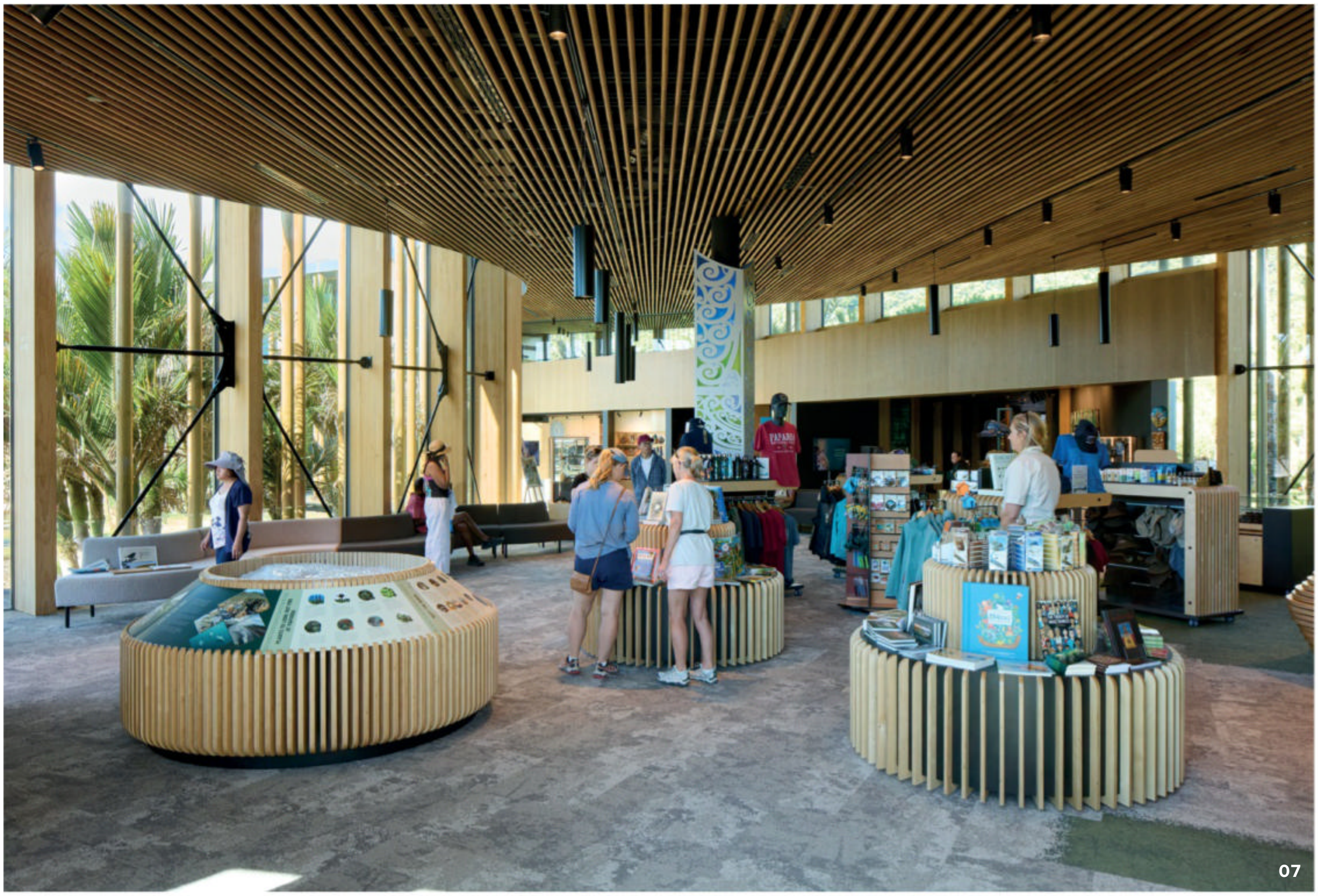
The visitor centre is predominantly enclosed with full-height glazing. This extent of glazing could easily have felt out of place but it is set behind a colonnade of sorts, wrapping the eastern and western faces. This colonnade is formed of full-height circular timber columns, closely mirroring the proportions and slenderness of the surrounding nīkau trunks. While doing little, if anything, structurally, these are critical to soften the edges of an otherwise rather large commercial building. Their presence also assists in the mitigation of bird strike, notably of the tāiko or Westland petrel, which nests only in the hills above the visitor centre.

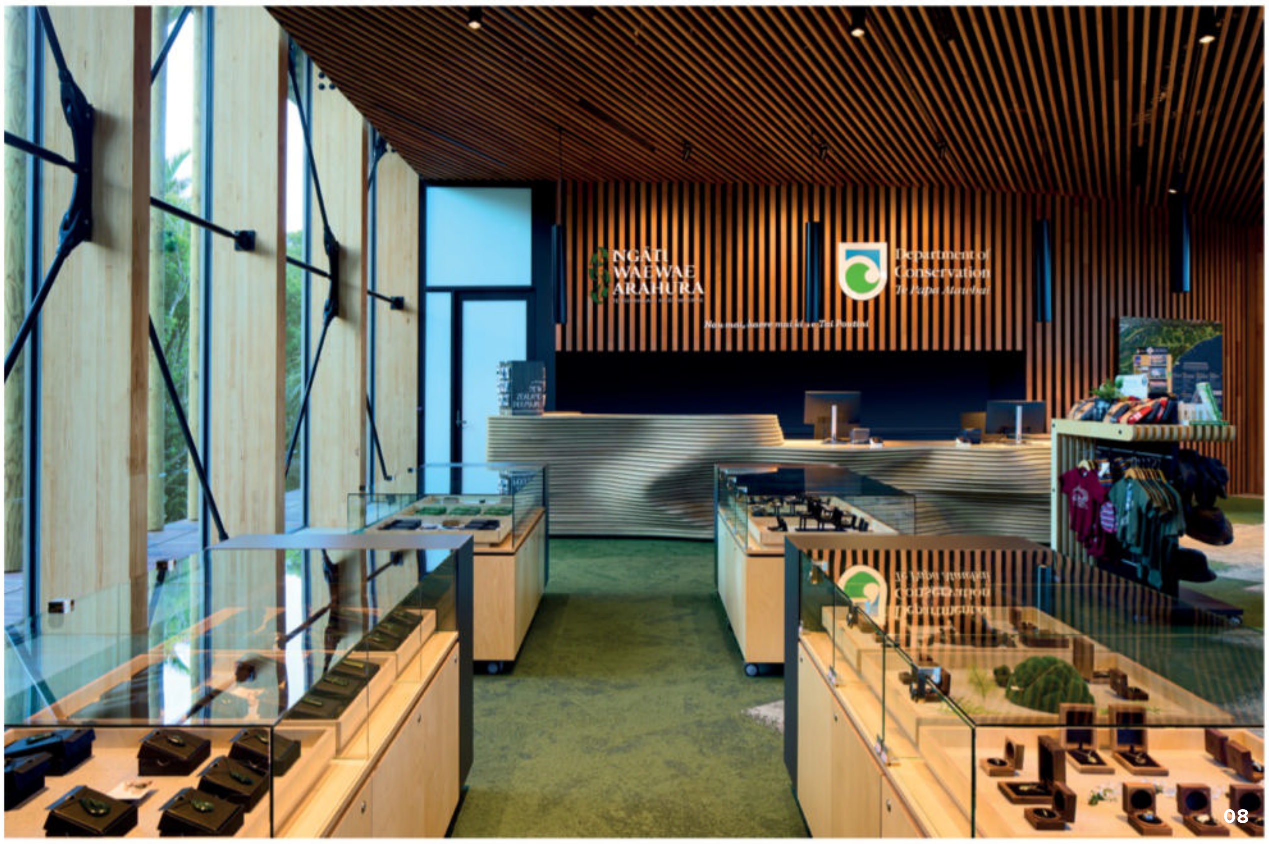


06

05 The curved plan is accentuated by the regular rhythm of glulam columns.

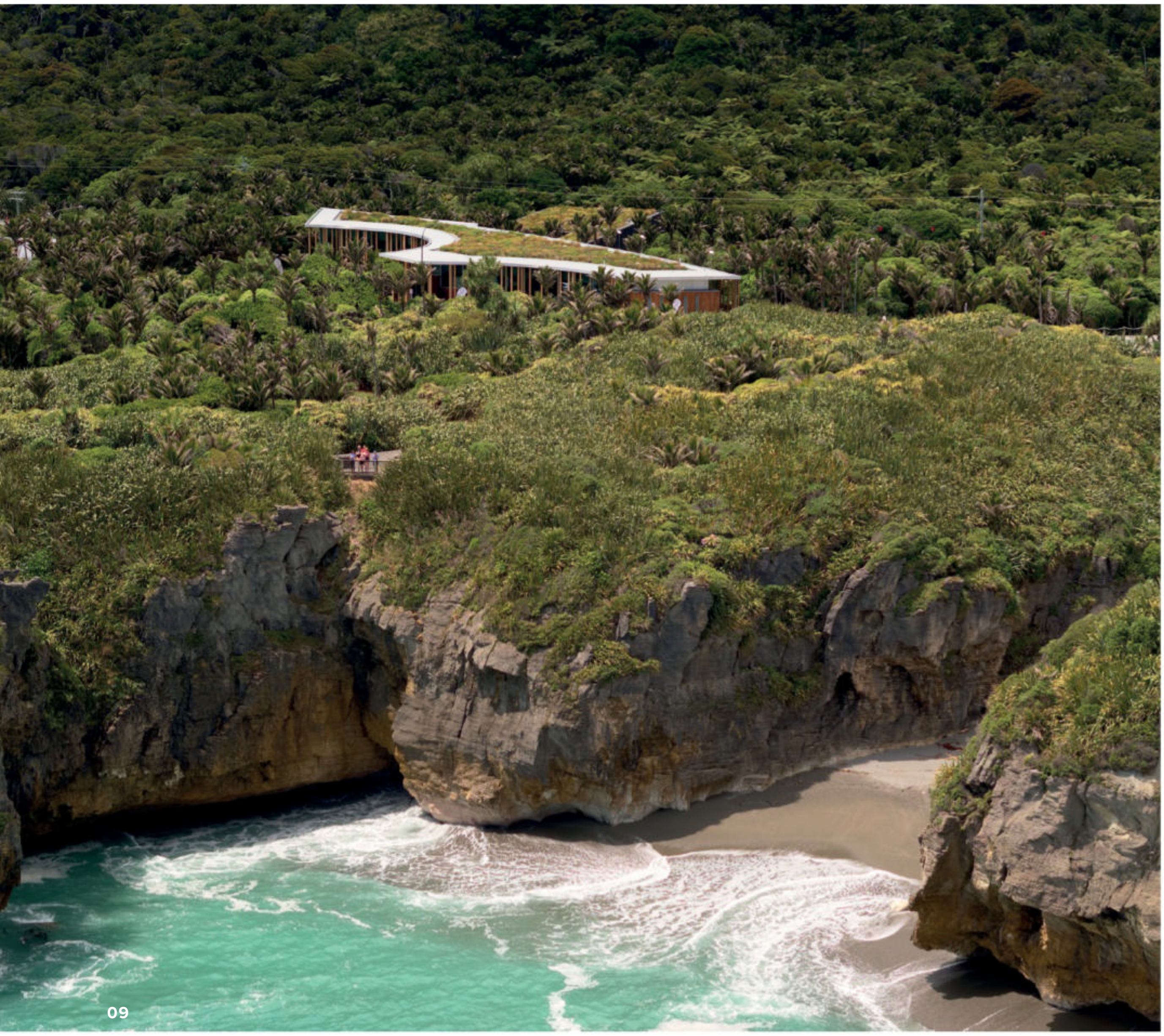
06 Considered steel cross-bracing wraps much of the exterior.




NGĀTI WAEWAE ARAHURA
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
08

07 Light filters from both east and west while the visually heavy roof seemingly hovers above.

08 Locally sourced beech linings form a backdrop to a shared counter.



09 Punangairi sits within the subtropical rainforest of Paparoa National Park, not far from the Pancake Rocks at Dolomite Point.

From within the main space, the living roof is again glimpsed as it extends over the lowered bridge roof. The inclusion of a living roof is representative of the conundrum of sustainable buildings. There is no questioning its symbolism but the typical benefits of living roofs, such as reduction in heat-island effect and stormwater retention, are of negligible benefit in Punangairi's context. Granted, there could be an argument for additional biodiversity but this is a rounding error in a 430km^2 national park. Much was made of the building's carbon credentials in earlier press on the project[2] but, as structural engineer on the project Rob Lane of Lewis Bradford Consulting notes, the inclusion of a living roof is broadly equivalent to installing a concrete roof on a single-storey building.[3] This building is close to the Alpine Fault and, had this living roof been replaced with a lightweight roof, it would, undoubtedly, have had smaller timber roof beams, less steel cross-bracing and, consequently, reduced global-warming potential.[4]

This aside, Punangairi is an undoubted success, welcoming and hosting manuhiri in Punakaiki in a unique and grounded way. The partnership between Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and the Department of Conservation seen here is a potential example for the creation of the assets that Aotearoa desperately needs to host ever-increasing tourist numbers. Sheppard & Rout's architecture, here, is a robust contextual response, sensitively inserted into an exceptional natural setting. Architecturally, it stands its ground with comparable visitor centres internationally but despite this building being initiated and now owned by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, I am left wondering where they were in the design process.

REFERENCES

[2] architecturenow.co.nz/articles/dolomite-point-aims-for-double-carbon-zero/

[3] Including saturated soil and mature plant growth, the green roof build-up weighs approximately 300kg/m^2. For context, a lightweight timber-framed membrane roof build-up could weigh approximately 50–75kg/m^2 and a 150mm-thick metal deck concrete slab could weigh approximately 250kg/m^2.

[4] LCA analysis by Sheppard & Rout estimates the building's environmental impact at a respectable 930kgCO$_2$e/m^2 (A1–A5, B1–B5, C1–C4 incl. sequestration). For comparison, the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge targets non-domestic buildings (new-build office) to achieve <970kgCO$_2$e/m^2 by 2025 and <750kgCO$_2$e/m^2 by 2030.

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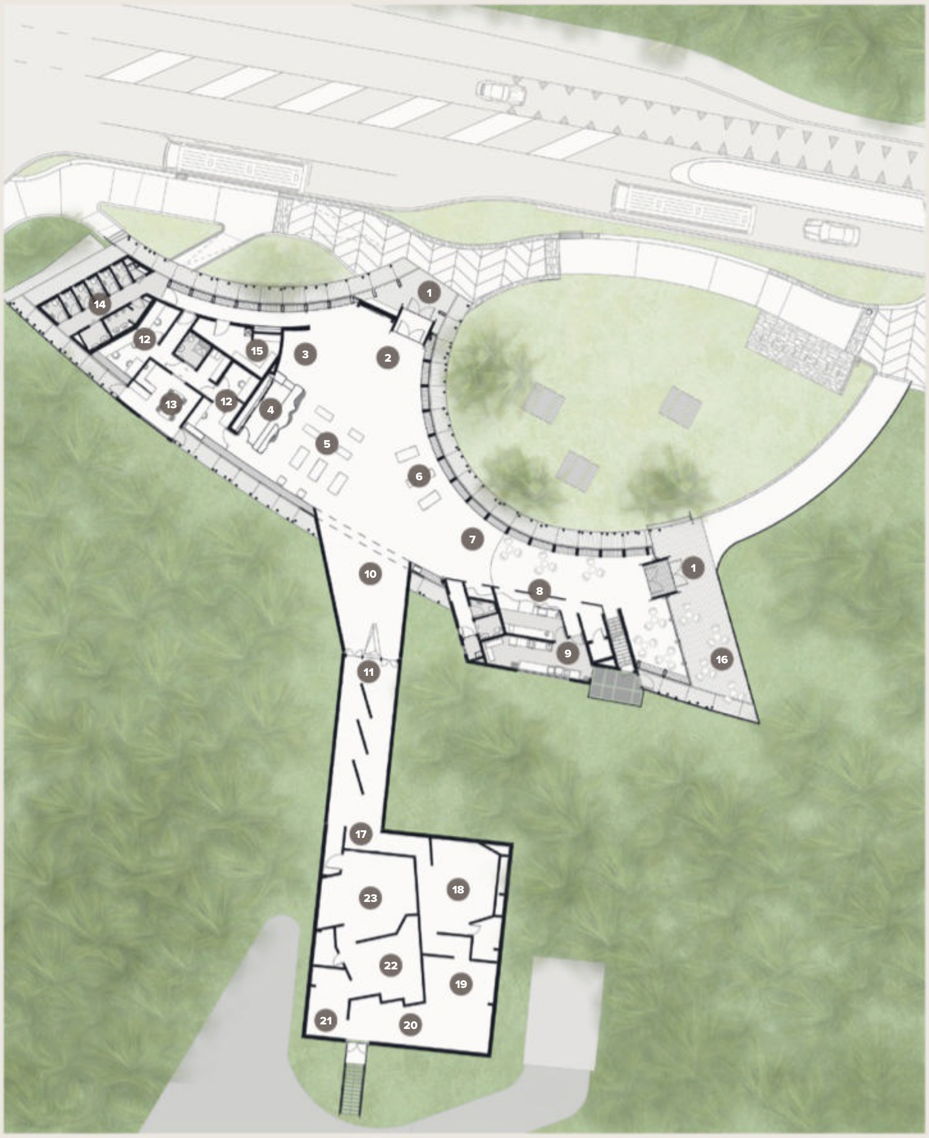
Photo: Country Residence by Harrison Lane
Gold Master Builder Award Winner

Project Information

LOCATION Dolomite Point, Punakaiki, West Coast
SITE AREA 23,368m^2
FLOOR AREA 1350m^2
STOREYS One, plus mezzanine
TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation: 18 months
Construction: 30 months

ARCHITECT Sheppard & Rout
PROJECT TEAM Steven Orr, Jasper van der Lingen, Tim Dagg, Mel North, Max Warren, Thomas Strange, Duncan Barron
BUILDER Naylor Love
HYDRAULIC, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEER Powell Fenwick

LANDSCAPING Kamo Marsh Landscape Architects
INTERIORS Sheppard & Rout
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Lewis Bradford Consulting
LIGHTING Powell Fenwick, Sheppard & Rout, Energylight
FAÇADE ENGINEER Thermosash Commercial
QUANTITY SURVEYOR Rawlinsons
SURVEYOR Chris J Coll Surveying
GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANT Golder Associates, WSP
TRAFFIC CONSULTANT Abley, Stantec
PLANNING CONSULTANT Boffa Miskell
ACOUSTICS Powell Fenwick
PROJECT MANAGER RCP, Dextera
CIVIL ENGINEER Davie Lovell-Smith
ROOFS Equus Soprema Duo
GREEN ROOF Stormwater 360
TIMBER BATTEN CEILING Sculptform
INSULATION Kingspan Kooltherm
LOBBY FLOORS Interface Carpet Tile Net Effect B602
ENTRANCE MATTING Advance Flooring
FLOOR Forbo Surestep Laguna
CARPET TILES Interface Urban Retreat
WALLS Foreverbeech board and batten wall cladding, Forbo Marmoleum Vivace
ACOUSTIC WALLS Autex Acoustics Vertiface
ACOUSTIC TIMBER WALL PANELS Prime Panels
JOINERY Laminex Melteca, Corian APT
PAINT Resene
VERANDAH PARAPET Alucobond
CIRCULAR POSTS TimberLab Glulam
WINDOW FRAMES Thermosash
PROFILED CLADDING Dimond
LOUVRES Holyoake
BIN STORE ROOF AND EXHIBITION CLADDING Architectural Roofing Company
BIN STORE WALL CLADDING Webforge, with Gray Brothers Engineering structural steel frame



GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

1	ENTRY
2	ARRIVAL CONCOURSE
3	DOC CONSERVATION STORIES
4	RECEPTION COUNTER AND BOOKINGS
5	DOC RETAIL
6	NGĀTI WAEWAE RETAIL
7	COMMUNITY RETAIL
8	CAFÉ
9	KITCHEN
10	EXHIBITION ENTRY
11	EXHIBITION LINK BRIDGE
12	OFFICE
13	STAFFROOM
14	PUBLIC TOILETS
15	STORAGE
16	CAFÉ DECK
17	INTRODUCTION
18	UPLIFT CINEMA
19	ALPINE EXHIBIT
20	RAINFOREST EXHIBIT
21	UNDERGROUND RIVER
22	CAVERN EXHIBIT
23	OCEAN EXHIBIT

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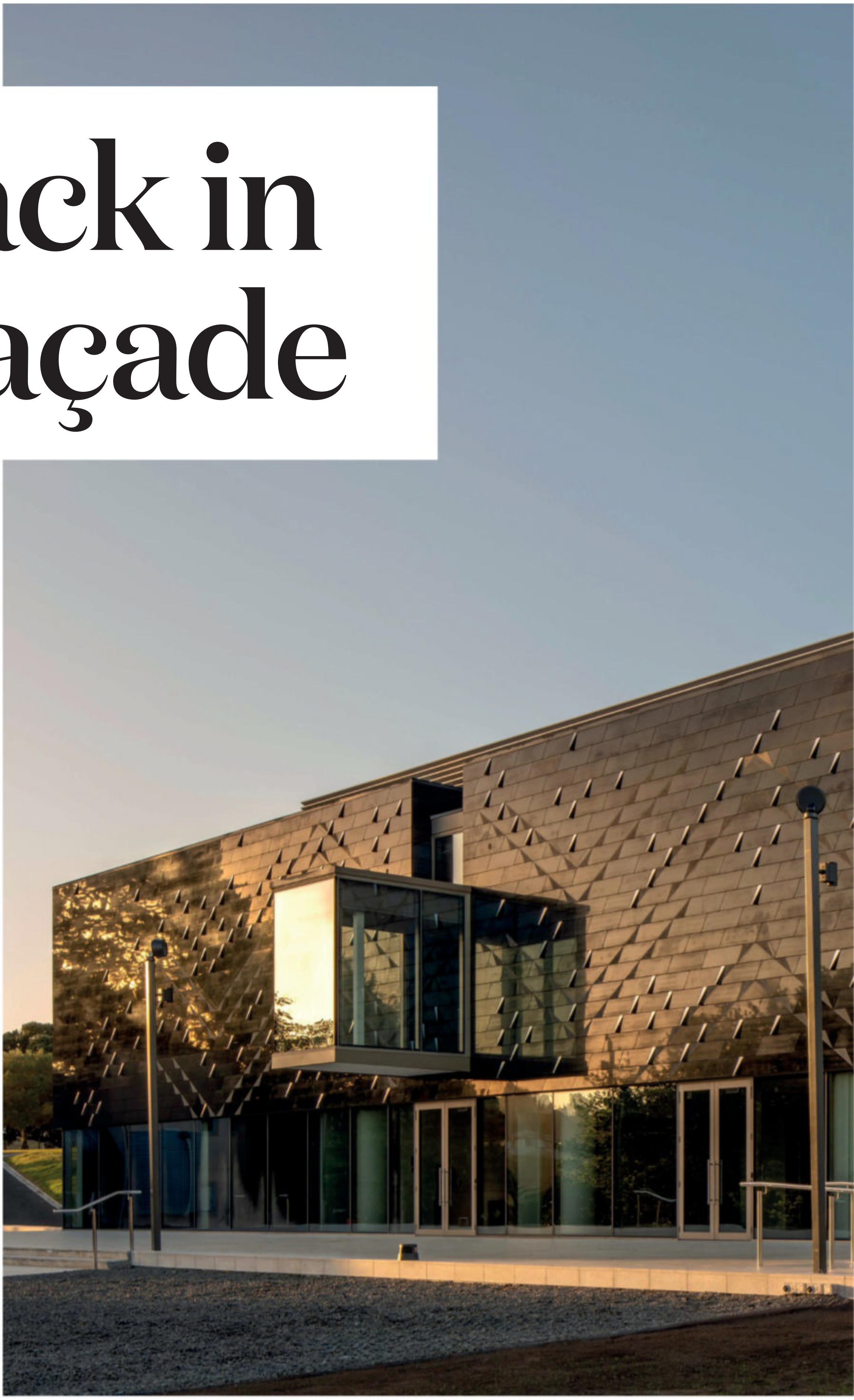
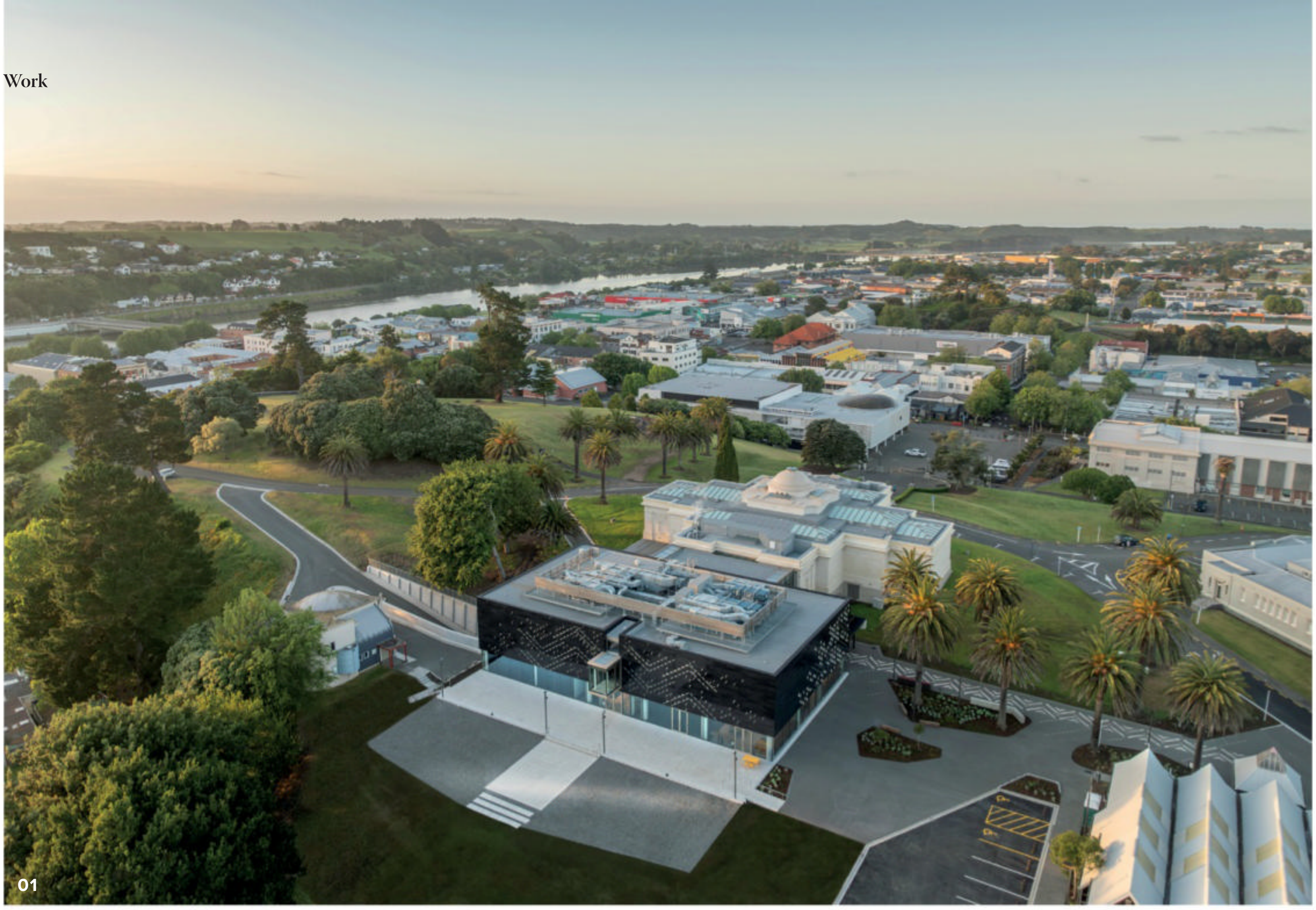
A crack in the façade

Mark Southcombe finds the addition by **Warren and Mahoney** to the already epic **Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery** in Whanganui creates a beautiful space of dialogue, reflecting a stunning coming together of old and new.

Photography
ANDY SPAIN

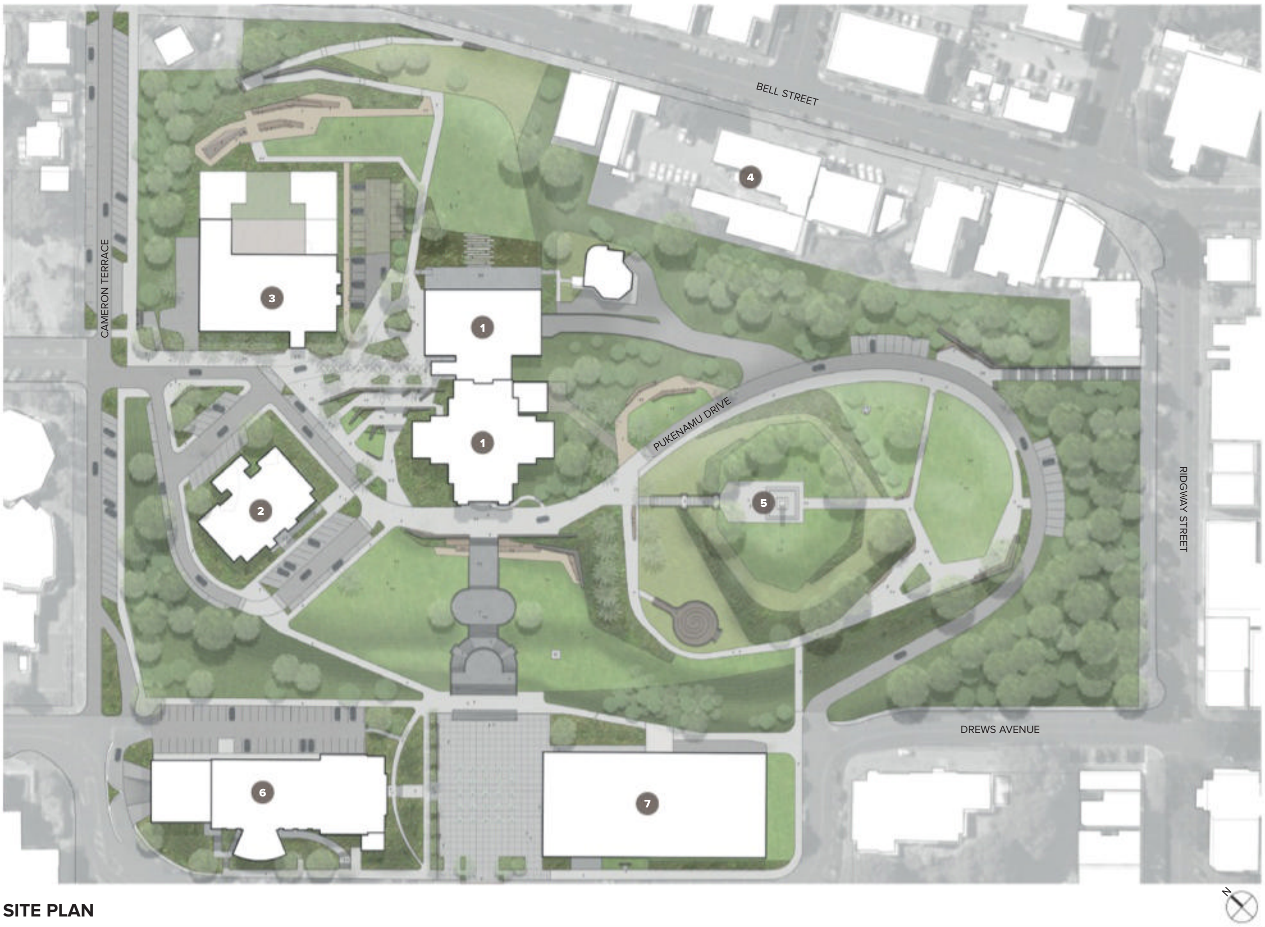


RIGHT The reflective black stone pātaka as viewed from the north.



01 Aerial view from the north.

02 The new western main entrance also connects to the existing gallery and the new pātaka.


BELL STREET
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CAMERON TERRACE
3
1
1
PUKENAMU DRIVE
2
5
RIDGWAY STREET
DREWS AVENUE
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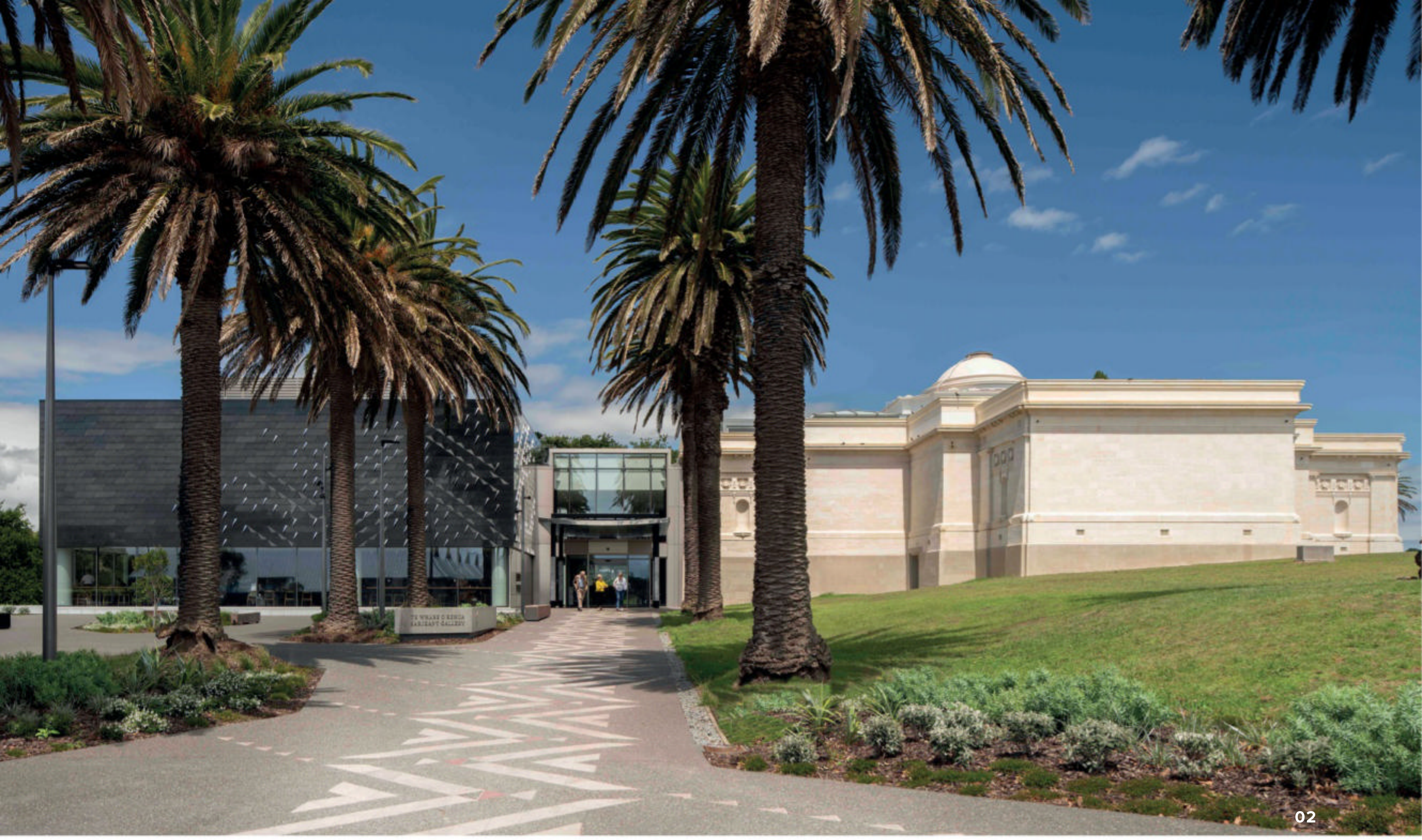
SITE PLAN

1 SARJEANT GALLERY
2 ALEXANDER HERITAGE & RESEARCH LIBRARY
3 WHANGANUI DISTRICT LIBRARY
4 POLICE STATION
5 CENOTAPH
6 WHANGANUI REGIONAL MUSEUM
7 WHANGANUI WAR MEMORIAL CENTRE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KO TE AWA TE MĀTĀPUNA O TE ORA. The river is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance. Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery Te Pātaka o Tā Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa celebrates provision for the Arts as a type of spiritual kai. The Sarjeant Gallery story is already epic, infusing Aotearoa New Zealand cultural and architectural history with generosity, quality and intrigue. Important to this story were the 1916 Samuel Hurst Seager consultation on the Queen's Park Civic Precinct planning, the top side lighting of museums and galleries, and the original open architectural competition.

The outstanding neoclassical design submitted under the auspices of Edmund Anscombe was attributed to his articled pupil Donald Hosie. Since 1919, the white Ōamaru Stone gallery has overlooked the awa from its Pukenamu Queen's Park site, glistening and reflecting the light: a pure architectural object in the landscape. A dome softens the silhouette and beautifully proportioned exterior niches carve out hollow space for the visual and sculptural arts. The interior is as strong, with an interconnected series of sublime, naturally backlit gallery spaces, culminating in a central dome gallery, the focal point of the design and the setting for many a great story.[1]

In an echo through history, in 1995, my practice consulted to Whanganui District Council, recommending that a cultural heritage study of the existing building and an addition to the gallery occur, and that an open architectural competition be undertaken as the means to realise the project.[2] The competition took place in 1999 and was won by Steve McCracken of Warren and Mahoney (WAM), in a design described by the jury as deceptively simple and understated. Influenced by the existing gallery and the Whanganui War Memorial Hall's formal language, the winning submission was an outstanding contextual, minimalist design that did a lot with a little, exhibiting a rare architectural humility and deference to the original work. This tactic, and the negative space between the existing and the new, created important space for dialogue that remained critical throughout the project's long development.

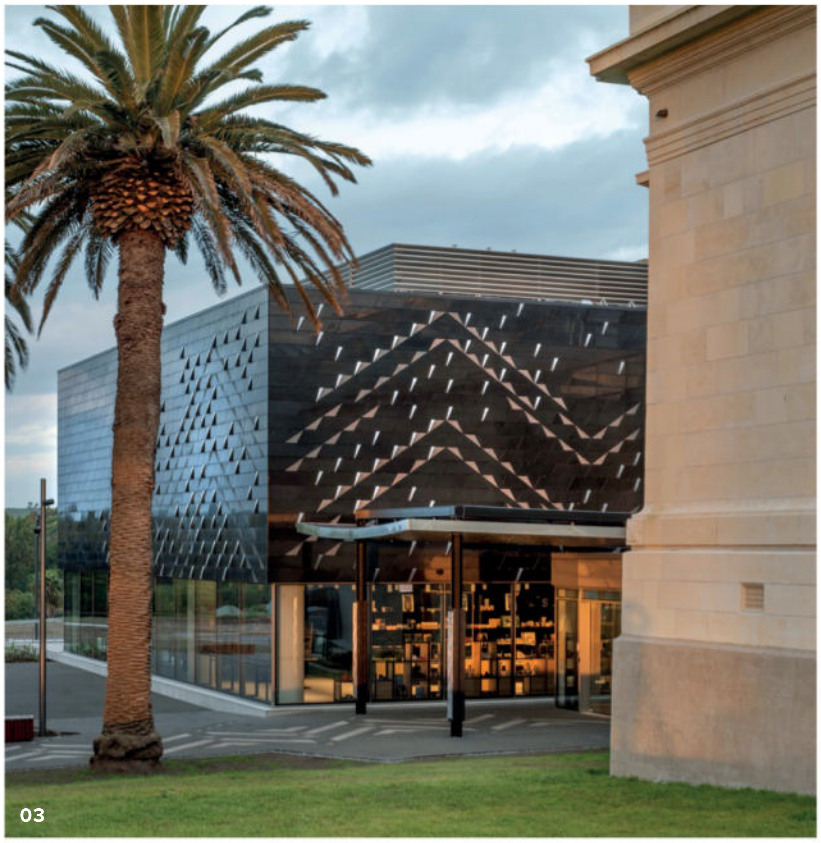
There was a 25-year gestation period before the competition design was realised. Over this time, the project passed through 55 sets of hands at WAM, with a similar level of turnover within the client groups and stakeholders.[3] A low moment occurred in 2004, when mayor Michael Laws canned the project and long-standing gallery director Bill Milbank left soon after. Laws seemed to take delight in baiting the local arts community but time shows he was more astute than his approach suggested, correctly identifying that there was no funding allocated to strengthen the existing building. In 2014, the gallery building was closed to

REFERENCES

[1] Martin Edmond, *Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery: A Whanganui Biography*, Massey University Press, 2024, has an excellent early history of the gallery and its key stories.

[2] Architects Southcombe McClean and Co and McGregor Consulting Group, *The Queens Park Accommodation Study*, September 1995, p. 52 and p. 76, and Strategic Landscape Plan.

[3] Ralph Roberts, kōrero between Ralph Roberts, Cecelia Kumeroa, Andrew Clifford and Mark Southcombe, Sarjeant Gallery, 27 January 2025.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the public after being assessed at 5 per cent of current earthquake codes. It was not until 2020 that the gallery strengthening, reconstruction and new building project commenced on site, and it reopened in late 2024.

The complexity and difficulty of regenerating the original building took around half of the $70-million-dollar project cost. Today, the gallery remains as beautiful and stunning as it has always been, inside and out. The exterior surfaces are cleaned of detritus, and a clunky access ramp to the building front and concrete plant room addition to the north-west have been erased. This is fantastic from the new gallery processional western approach. Less great for the existing building and its relationship to its landscape is the accommodation of the very extensive services. They occupy the whole original basement area and a large new plant room addition on the east of the original gallery. From the interior, you have to look hard to find how strengthening and servicing have occurred. Modernist-era floating exhibition gallery wall layers are retained within the classical shell and these hide a great deal. The planning is cleaned up, with no trace of a makeshift stair that once terminated the western gallery. The original entrance and the two galleries at the southern side are restored. The petite, beautifully lit Miniature Gallery spaces remain with an Arts Library function but, sadly, now with limited public access and crammed full of dexion library shelving. Hopefully, this might change over time, particularly with the extent of new storage space created in the contemporary Pātaka Gallery addition.

The rare clarity of the competition design thinking guided the new works as change was needed: “The design should be very simple and follow the order of the original building, and it must look to the Awa and Maunga.”[4] Aotearoa New Zealand in the 21st century is different from the way it was in 1999 and very different from that of 1916. “There is no Māori tradition represented in this house of art, not even among the minor orders. Within the decoration of the Sarjeant, we find union jacks and oak leaves.”[5] Today, WAM has an in-house cultural design team but the new gallery project predated this, creating a challenge: “How do we influence the building, even though it’s under construction?”[6] This was answered by an extended co-design process with Whanganui River iwi, represented by a group of artists appointed by Te Rūnanga o Tūpoho, a collective of hapū from the lower reaches of the Whanganui River and led by artist Cecelia Kumeroa under the guidance of kaumātua Uncle John Maihi. The desire to advance a significant local expression and problems with the Ōamaru Stone supply converged, creating opportunity to reconceive a new gallery narrative. This reinforced the value of the axial planning and of the creation of ‘a crack in the façade’, and a

03 Kānapanapa patterns to the façade reflect shifting light and create moving shadows.

04 Floating walls accommodate services in the restored east gallery.

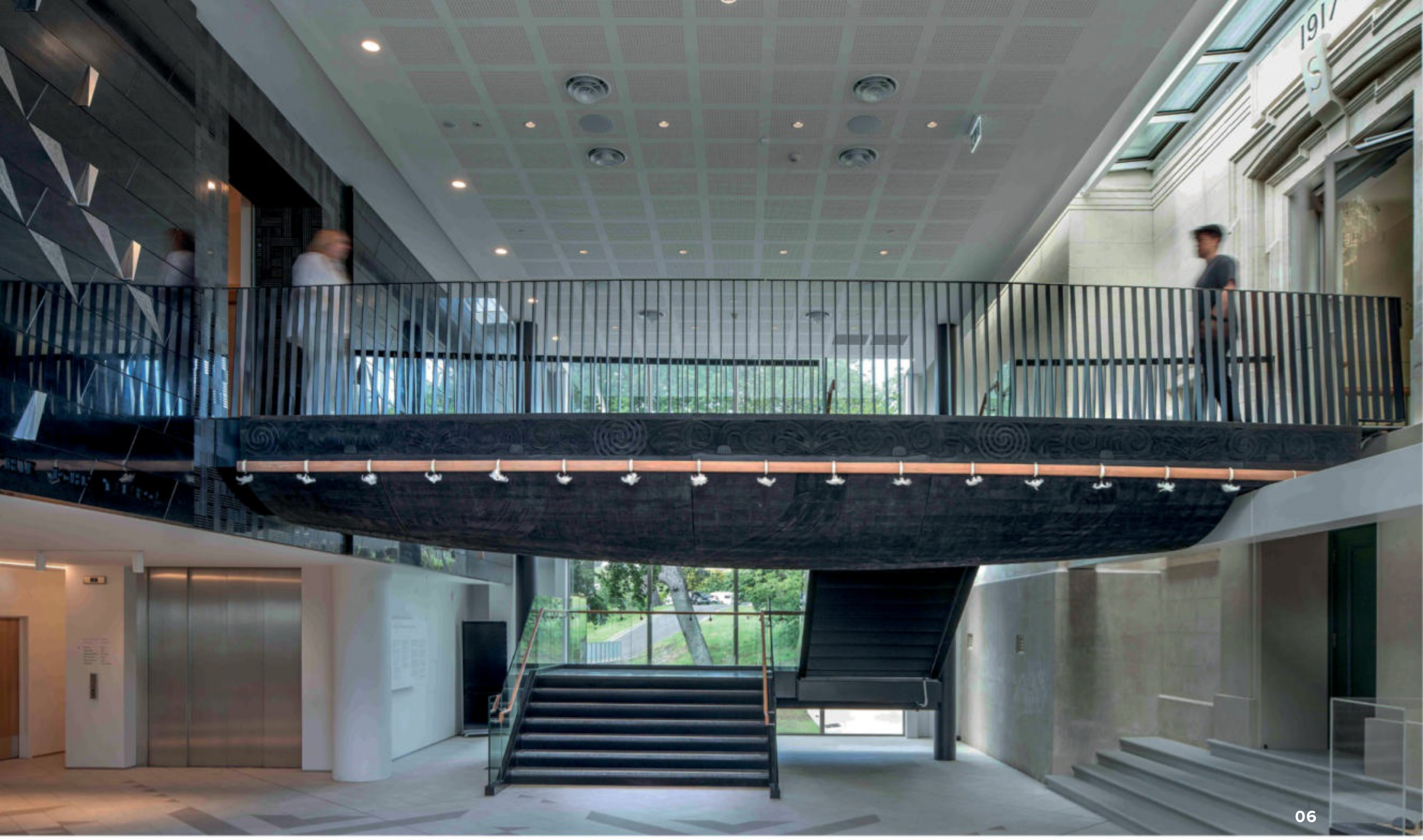
05 An education classroom on the upper floor of the new pātaka.

REFERENCES

[4] Ralph Roberts, kōrero between Ralph Roberts, Cecelia Kumeroa, Andrew Clifford and Mark Southcombe, Sarjeant Gallery, 27 January 2025.

[5] Mark Southcombe, ‘The Wrestler’s Ball’, *Art New Zealand* 72, Spring 1994, pp. 54–56.

[6] ‘Sensitive Simplicity’, *Architecture NZ*, March/April 2000, pp. 72–81.



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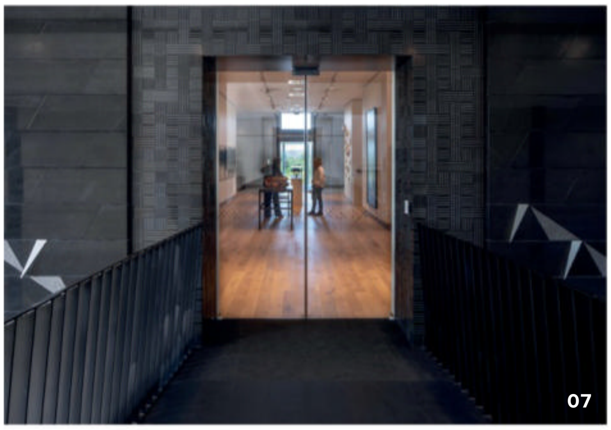


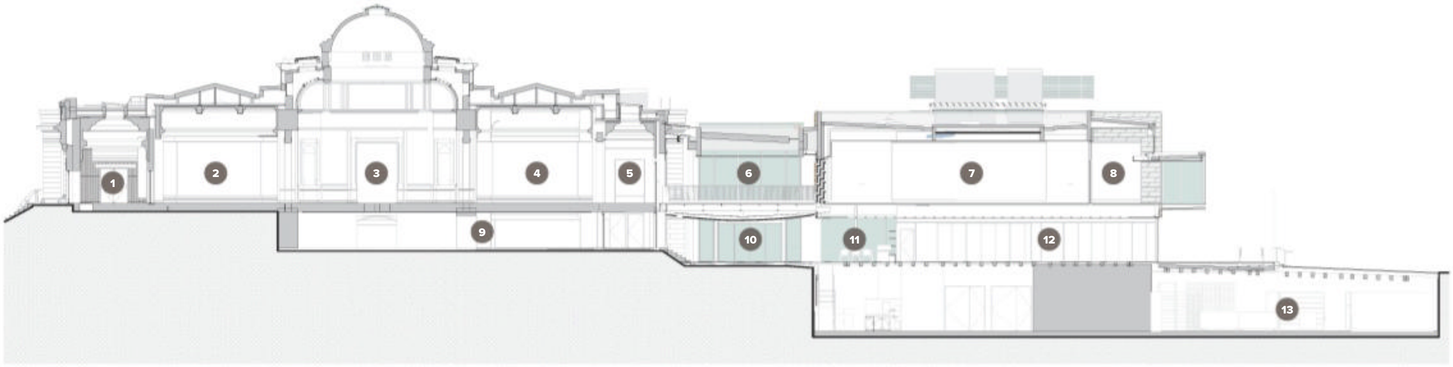
07

08

06 A black carved waka bridges the space between galleries.

07 The bridge leads to the central gallery.

08 A large-volume contemporary gallery is the main exhibition space in the new pātaka.



GALLERY AND EXTENSION SECTION

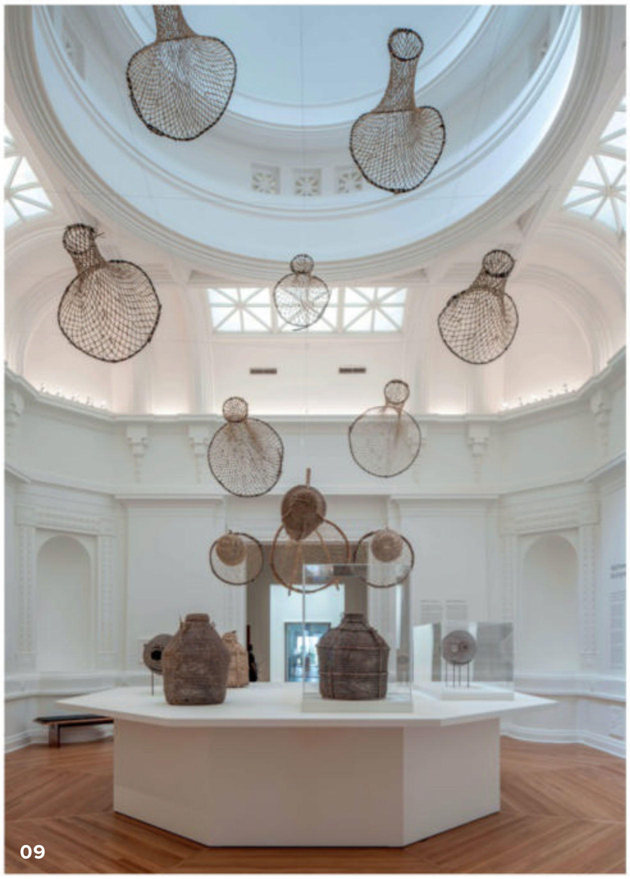
1 SOUTH ENTRY LOBBY
2 SOUTH GALLERY
3 DOME GALLERY
4 NORTH GALLERY
5 NORTH ENTRY LOBBY
6 WAKA/BRIDGE
7 GALLERY 05
8 LOOKOUT GALLERY
9 PLANT ROOM
10 MAIN ENTRY
11 RECEPTION
12 CIRCULATION
13 ART STORE

culminating moment on the spatial progression: a suspended glass box opening the gallery and extending views to the Whanganui awa and its source, Ruapehu maunga. The unique visual languages of the river, such as kānapanapa – the shifting light reflecting off the waters – became a key new concept. The blackness of Whanganui carving and pakohe, a rare, local black greenstone, are among the other layered narratives.

These ideas find beautiful expression in the stunning reflective black stone façade, highlighted by tioata inserts: splashes of steel that abstract the effect of light shimmering on the water. The narratives also informed the design of tiling for floors, the entry mahau and the waka bridge. An ethereal reflective underside of the entry mahau is a particularly sublime moment, as a new river of people flows under and into the gallery. The original competition design parti informs the planning and cross-section. A huge basement level with very contemporary collection storage and servicing areas is buried below a glazed, visually open ground level, with main entry, reception, shop and café, function and lecture rooms, and staff and meeting rooms. This is topped with an upper level, clad in reflective black stone, raised on piloti and largely separated from the external environment. It contains contemporary rectangular exhibition spaces of different scales, and education spaces. These neutral-volume, super-flexible, well-serviced gallery spaces are already a delight to curator Andrew Clifford and artists exhibiting.

Refreshingly simple axial circulation connects the levels of the new gallery and extends the original city and Sarjeant north/south axis via a black waka bridge over the entry space between new and old. The axis visually links the old and new interior spaces through the original galleries and the central dome, over the entry negative space, through new central upper galleries, and out to the glass box and landscape beyond. Brilliant! The structural and services integration struggle is handled well for the most part but is visible from the entrance space between new and old.

The Gallery is an object in the round within Pukenamu Queen's Park, with a now-disrupted landscape context on some sides and a well-integrated new landscape from the west, framed beautifully by an existing avenue of Phoenix palms. Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery Te Pātaka o Tā Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa has come of age. This starts with the more inclusive bicultural identity. The duality also reflects the architectural expression of the new-old hybrid gallery: a place of dialogue reflecting its people and stories, and belonging to its place.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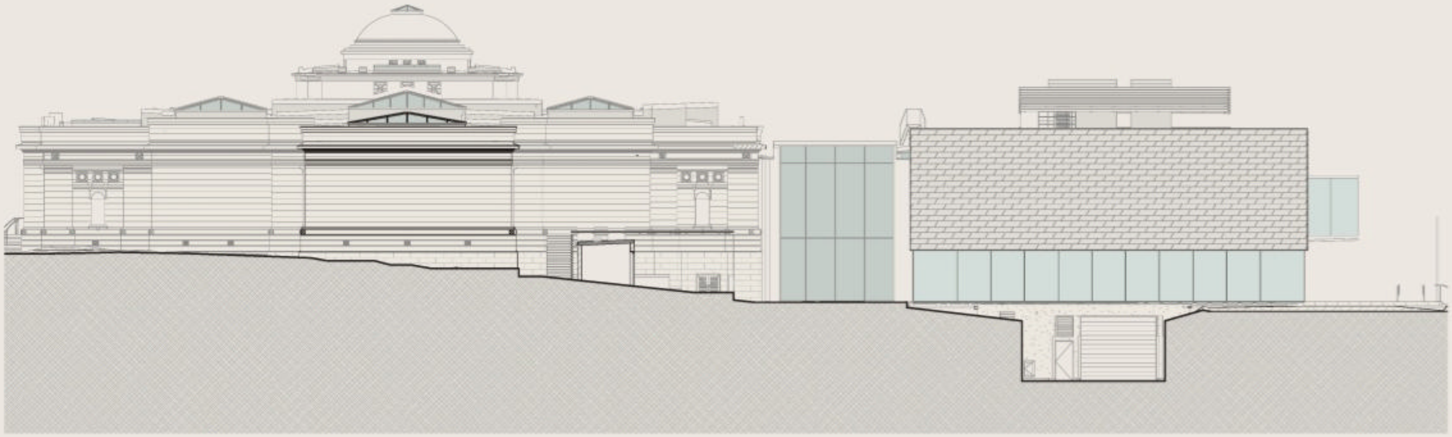
09 Matthew McIntyre Wilson's *Whatu Mai* is exhibited in the central dome gallery.

10

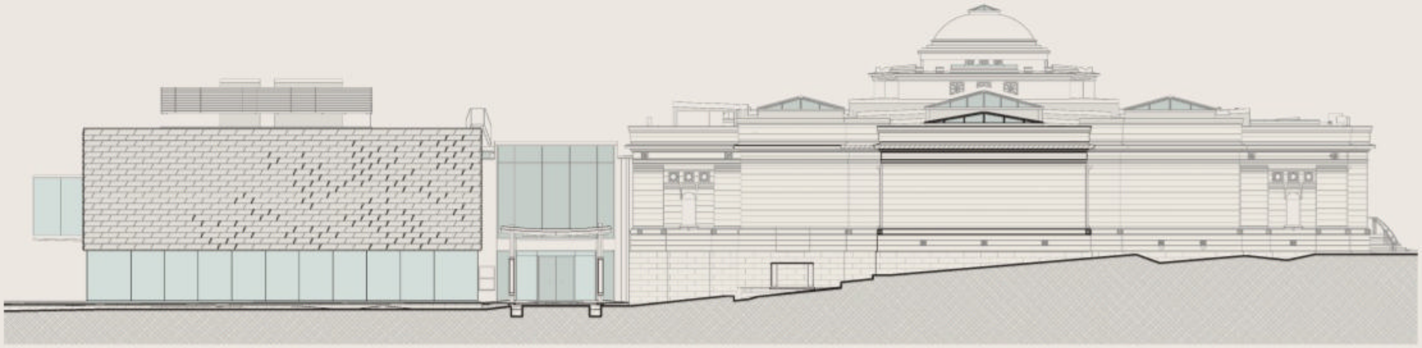
10 Works from the permanent collection are displayed in the restored top-lit gallery bays.

Edith Collier
11

11 Each of the existing restored and strengthened galleries retains its essential character.



EAST ELEVATION



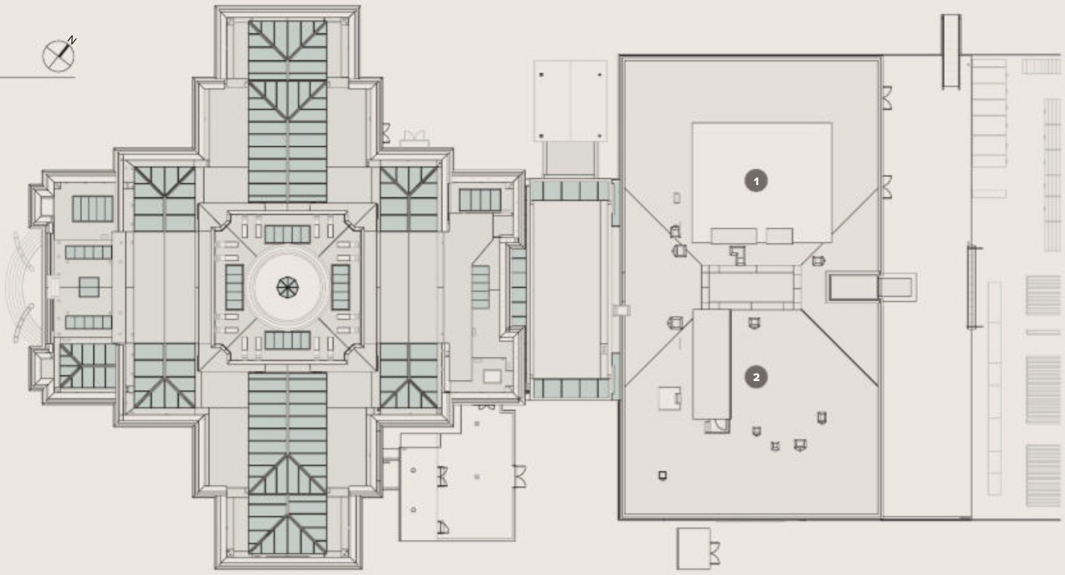
WEST ELEVATION

Project Information

LOCATION
4 Pukenamu Drive, Whanganui
FLOOR AREA 4400m^2
STOREYS Three
TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation: 24 months
Construction: 54 months
ARCHITECT Warren and Mahoney
PROJECT TEAM Ralph Roberts, Cliff Leong, Emelia Atkins, Hester Paul, Jenny Mikoz, Savanah Hunt
CULTURAL DESIGN PARTNER
Te Kāhui Toi o Tūpoho
HERITAGE ARCHITECT
Chris Cochran and Russell Murray
BUILDER
McMillan & Lockwood Construction
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Clendon Burns & Park
HYDRAULIC ENGINEER NDY
MECHANICAL ENGINEER
Pacific Consultants
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
BlackYARD Group
LANDSCAPING Warren and Mahoney
QUANTITY SURVEYOR RLB
FIRE CONSULTANT
Origin Fire Consultants
PROJECT MANAGER RCP
CIVIL ENGINEER WSP
ROOFING Equus
WAKA BRIDGE AND TIMBER HANDRAILS Naturally Wood by design
FAÇADE GLAZING AND SKYLIGHTS Wight Aluminium
EXTENSION FAÇADE
TILING Trethewey Stone, Laticrete
SEISMIC JOINT SYSTEM Balco
HERITAGE STONEWORK
Goldfield Stone
INTERIOR DAYLIGHTING Kalwall
INTERIOR FLOORING Jacobsen
PAINT AND PAINT SYSTEMS
Resene
INTERIOR PLASTERING AND PLASTER SYSTEMS Sto
ENTRY MATS Advance Flooring
ACOUSTIC CEILING AND GLAZED INTERIOR PARTITIONS
Potter Interior Systems
OPERABLE WALLS Lotus Doors NZ
MAHAU SOFFIT PANEL AND CUSTOM METALWORK
Mike Christie Sheetmetals
RECEPTION, RETAIL AND CAFÉ JOINERY Rob O'Keeffe Joinery
INTERIOR STAIR TREADS AND EXTERIOR PAVING
Giacon Terrazzo

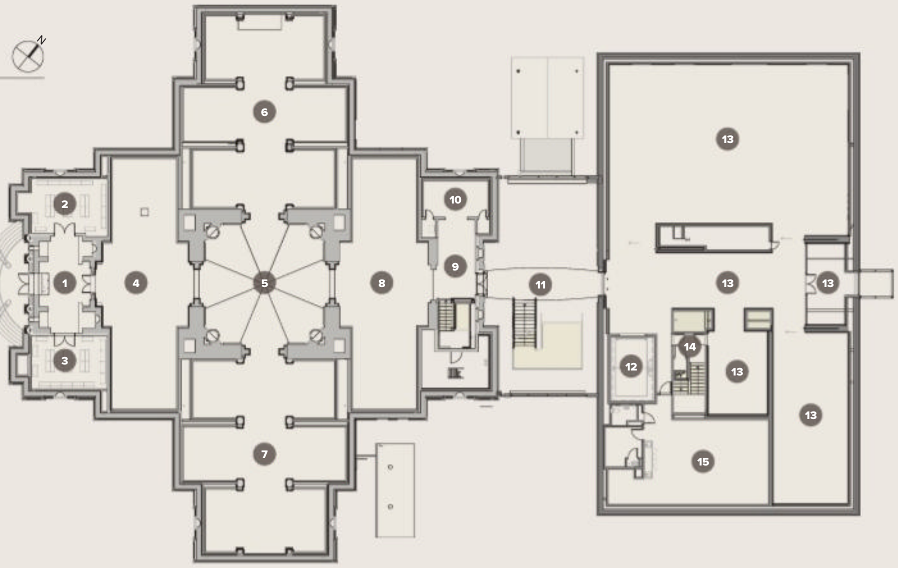
ROOF PLAN

1 PLANT PLATFORM A
2 PLANT PLATFORM B



FIRST-FLOOR PLAN

1 SOUTH ENTRY LOBBY
2 MEMBERS' AREA
3 LIBRARY
4 SOUTH GALLERY
5 DOME GALLERY
6 WEST GALLERY
7 EAST GALLERY
8 NORTH GALLERY
9 NORTH ENTRY LOBBY
10 FAMILY ROOM
11 WAKA BRIDGE
12 LIFT
13 GALLERY
14 STAIRS
15 EDUCATION ROOM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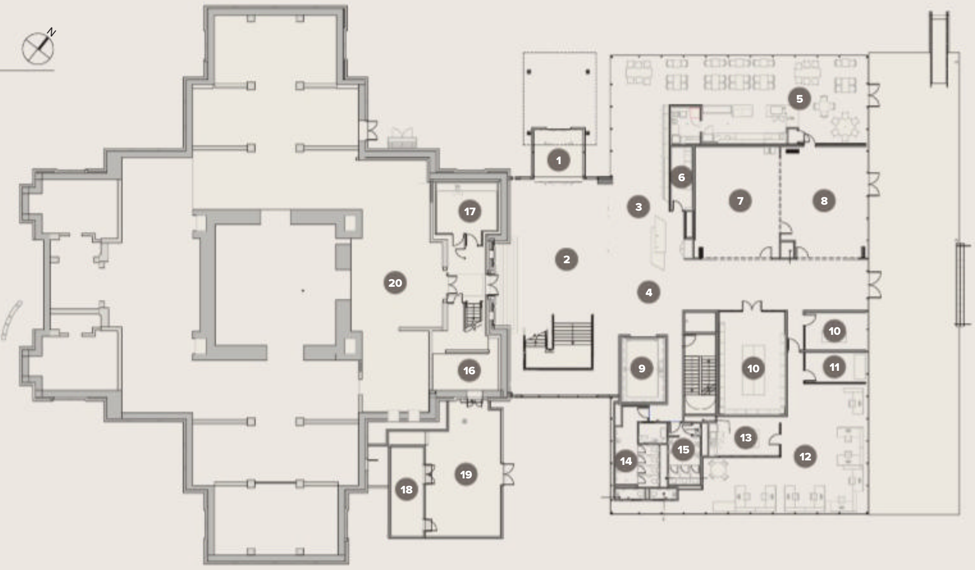
GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

1 WIND LOBBY
2 ENTRY
3 RECEPTION
4 CIRCULATION
5 CAFÉ
6 BAGS
7 AUDITORIUM
8 FUNCTION ROOM
9 LIFT
10 MEETING ROOM
11 OFFICE
12 OPEN-PLAN OFFICE
13 STAFFROOM
14 MALE WC
15 FEMALE WC
16 BOILER ROOM
17 KITCHEN STOREROOM
18 SWITCHBOARD ROOM
19 EXTERNAL PLANT
20 PLANT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Living in the laboratory

Carolyn Hill visits the **Hills Residences** on the banks of the Waikato River and finds both beauty and tenacity in the **Edwards White Architects** adaptive reuse project, which won last year's Sir Ian Athfield Housing Award.

Photography
SIMON WILSON

LEFT The Hills Residences, complete with communal swimming pool, overlooks Waikato Te Awa.

WHAT TO DO WITH A LARGE BLOCK OF LAND, overlooking the river and minutes from the CBD but encumbered with an old chemical testing laboratory and a structurally frail historic building[1] from when horses dominated the high street?

It would be reasonable to assume complete demolition of the science lab and a bun fight over the fate of the heritage building. In the hands of Stark Property and Edwards White Architects, however, the former Hills Laboratory has been transformed into Hills Residences, a high-end apartment building for Kirikiriroa Hamilton's budding inner urbanites.

Making the most of a sweet spot on the eastern bank of Waikato Te Awa, alongside restaurant-studded Grey Street and adjacent Victoria Bridge into the city, Hills Residences is part of a bigger master plan – Hills Village – that includes two commercial premises, another apartment building and terraced townhouses. It's also part of a broader vision to turn the city to the river, something that the Stark and Edwards White combo has been pushing for a while. Hills Residences gives a taste of what this reorientation could be for a city that's only just beginning to find its own place and story. Leaning into a southern bend of the river and framing views of its dense treescape, the architecture ascribes to a (re) fresh(ed) way of seeing Kirikiriroa: one that honours Waikato Te Awa and centres its presence at the heart of growth, community and cultivation.

I visit the building on a sunny day in December, chaining my bicycle to a convenient tree due to a lack of bike parks. For a design that just won the Sir Ian Athfield Award for Housing and a New Zealand Architecture Award on a sustainability ticket, it's not immediately singing to me. I find the lead architect, Daniel Smith, who proceeds to struggle with the security lock on the back gate. He climbs the wall instead. You know you've got a good architect when they can scale a six-foot wall without blinking an eye. There's something in the clothes – black casual with just a hint of stretch; ankle boots with steelcap. It speaks to an ability to move seamlessly from boardroom debates to the best of can-do creativity, and it is here that the true grit of this project begins to emerge. Smith himself seems a bit bemused by the accolades. "I think it's hitting the right narrative at the right time at the moment, in terms of adaptive reuse, sustainability, like that's a big push right now. Which is awesome, but yeah, maybe it just fits the bill."

As self-deprecation is a national pastime, I take this assessment with a grain of salt. It becomes clear that environmental sustainability was a key part of decision-making as Smith leads me through the design. The 1970s' science lab was a four-storey

01

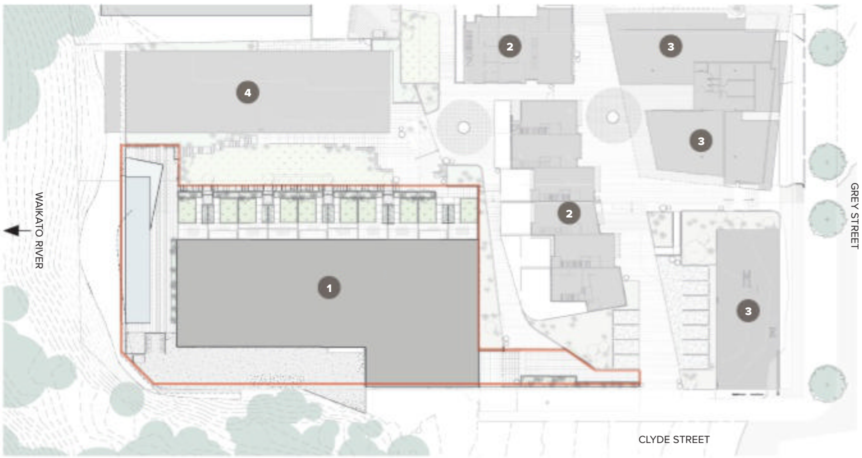
02

01 Reusing a four-storey laboratory building, Hills Residences sits within the river's treescape.

02 Penthouse corner balconies take advantage of views across the river.

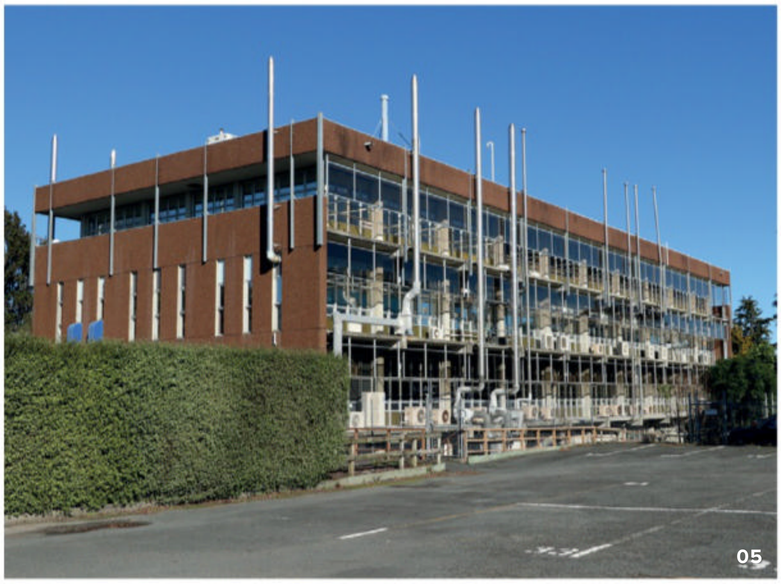
REFERENCE

[1] The historic Waikato County Council building was built in 1910 with a recently patented aerated reinforced concrete called 'camerated concrete'.



SITE PLAN

1 HILLS RESIDENCES **2** TERRACED TOWNHOUSES **3** COMMERCIAL BUILDING **4** ANZAC APARTMENTS



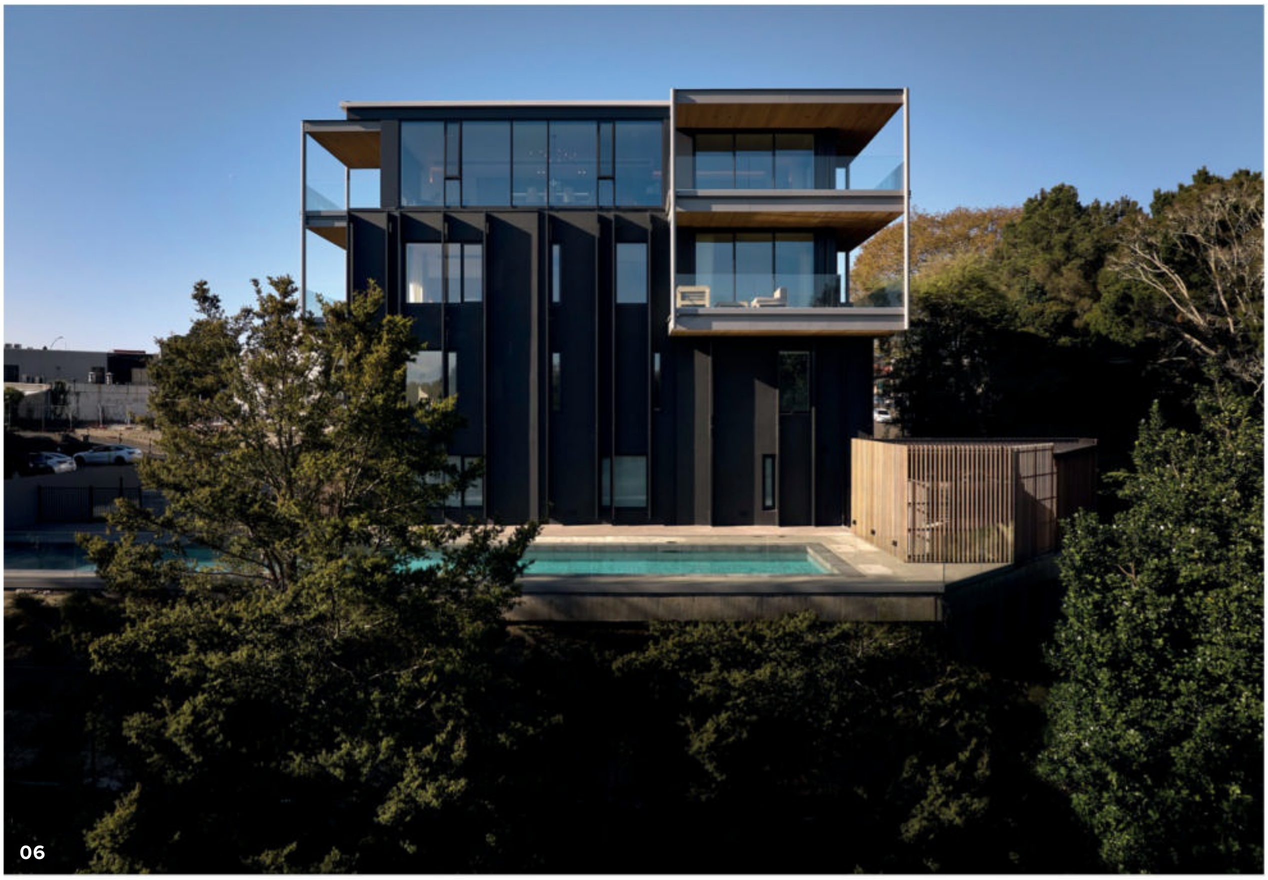
03 Projecting balconies and pocket gardens enable individuality within the group.

04 The apartment building leans into a southern bend of the Waikato River.

05 Adaptive reuse: the former Hills Laboratory prior to redevelopment.

pebbledash concrete box (pictured left) with slot windows on the short end walls and long spandrels along the northern and southern longitudinal façades. Initial optimism about the building's ability to absorb a complex change of use was to prove, well, optimistic. The whole structure was, to use Smith's technical term, "stuffed". Inter-floor acoustic control was non-existent, fire protection was from a different era, and the whole thing threatened to meander off down the steep slope to the Waikato River if given half a chance.

What followed was a labour of love (and safety): a retaining wall on the western boundary the depth of the river itself; new acoustic floor systems and fire separation; seismic strengthening to each end wall with new steel K bracing and floors reinforced with fibreglass strips to tie the whole system together. If the ability to visually expose and celebrate original raw concrete and steel was limited by these constraints, the project more than compensates in creative floor layouts, bespoke detailing and richness of materiality. The four storeys are reconstituted as 10 two-storey townhouses accessed at ground-floor level, plus nine



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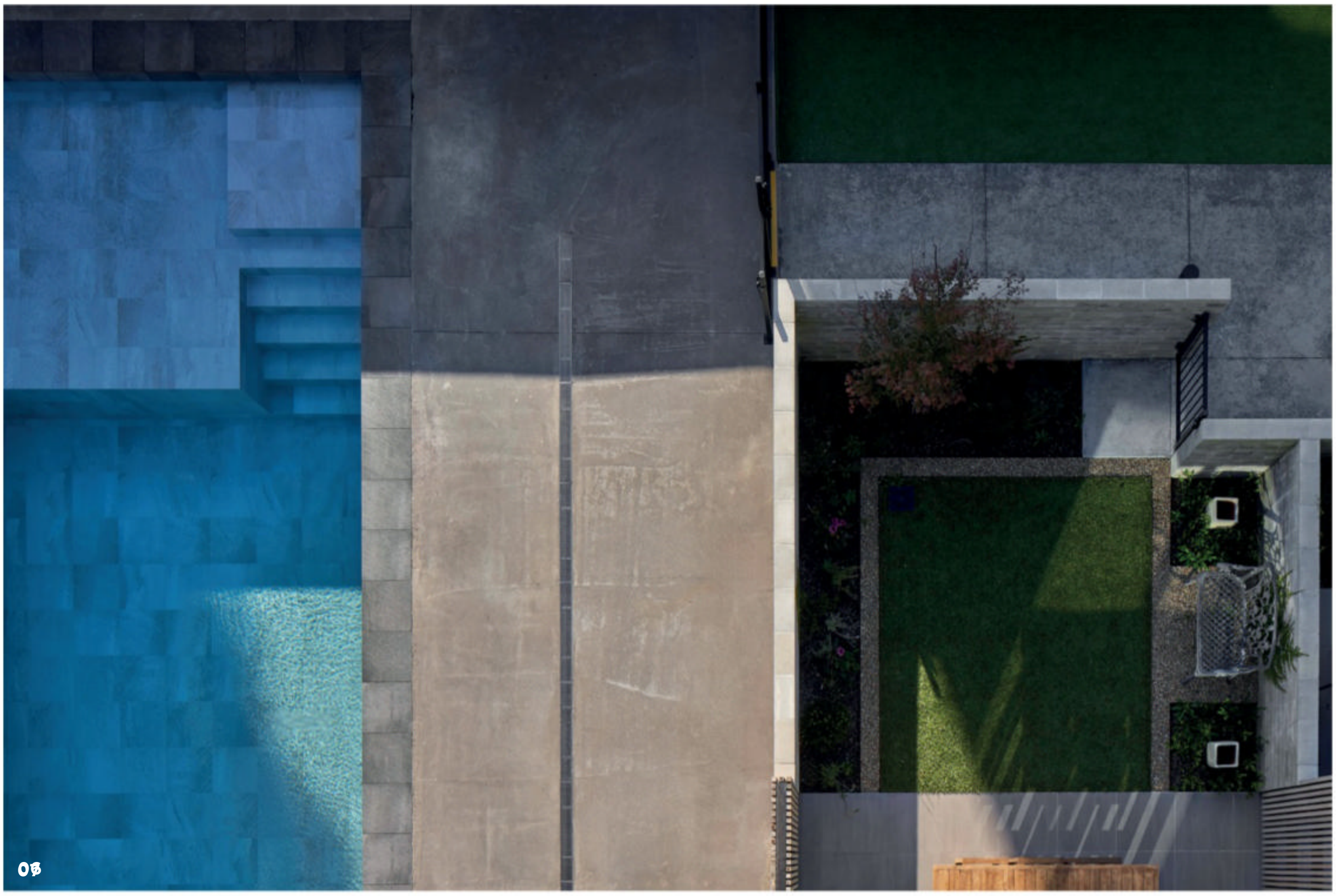


07

06 Western elevation. The development of the remainder of the site continues to the left.

07 The shared pool is accessed from the rear of the townhouses.

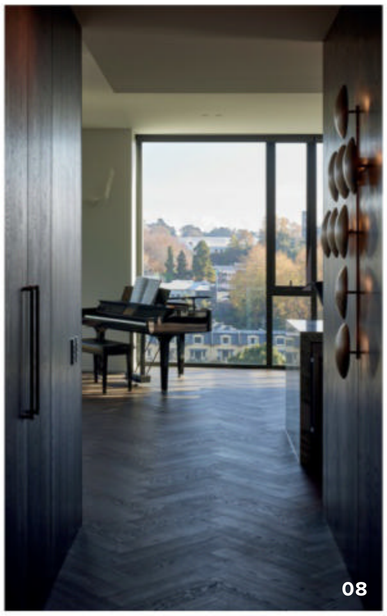
apartments across the two upper floors comprising a range of sizes, outlooks and price points. In overall form, the two original end walls are retained while the long northern and southern façades are loosened up for change, bringing together a solidity of black brick cladding with lightly framed steel balconies and window detailing.

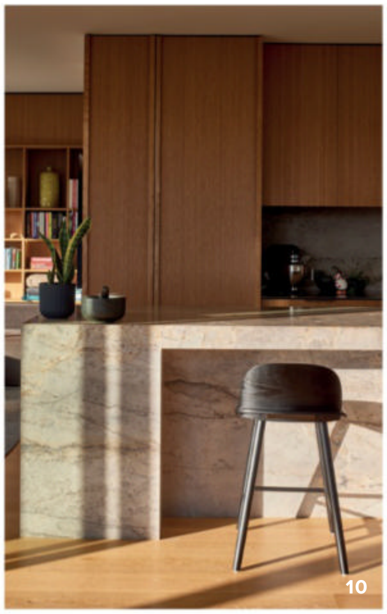
The balconies' uneven distribution across the northern façade creates a sense of individuality in the collective, an impression that extends to the diverse townhouse gardens and interior design. The building is almost entirely owner-occupied, with keen future residents buying off the plans and able to customise their own fitouts. A French bulldog enthusiastically welcomes us in one back garden; a couple of kids' scooters are lying around in the next. A profusion of potted plants and hanging baskets fills one balcony; another features deckchairs and a barbecue. It's clear that a diverse range of residents are making this building their own, embracing a design that has the flexibility to accommodate them.

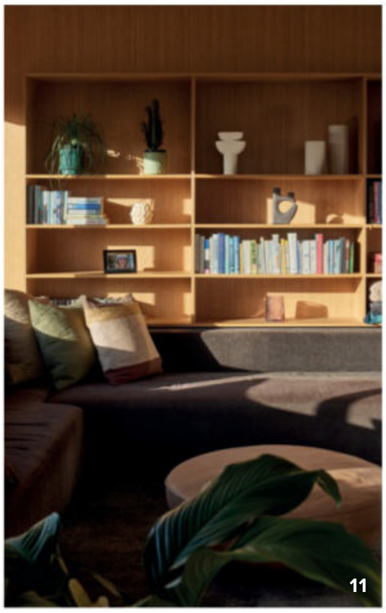
Then there's the clever things that good architects are made of. Careful sunlight access diagrams to ensure that ground-floor townhouse gardens get continual northern light. 'Snorkel' bedrooms, where one room has a big northern aspect and the other snorkels out to it, creating a cunning little desk nook as a side effect. Attention to storage, flow and canny layouts that make each apartment feel generous and roomy even as 19 homes occupy less than half an acre of land.

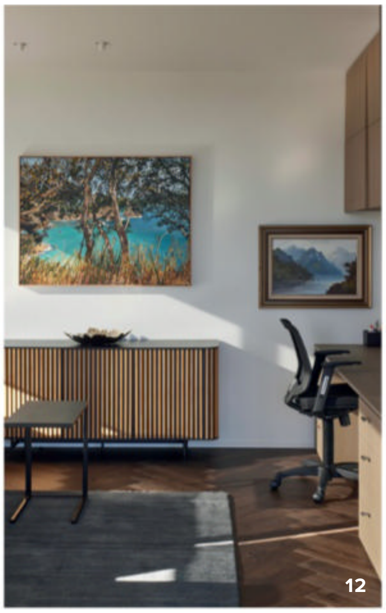
Adaptive reuse. Tick. Density. Tick. Was there space to push the sustainability envelope further here? Some long-term environmental sustainability initiatives are built in – good design results in low energy consumption, all HVAC is centralised, as is hot water, which runs off a series of solar panels on the roof. Recycling and waste are collected communally. But there's no space for composting food scraps or garden waste – is that Council obstacles on collectivised collection systems or is there an architecturally 'clean' aesthetic at play? And what about (sore point) bikes? In the deep recesses of the underground car park there's a small bike stand but the dominant vibe is still cars first. In a city that was built in the motorway era, it can be hard to move the dial.

The end result emerges as a success story in adaptive reuse and density done well, and is rightly celebrated. But it also speaks to the difficulties in Aotearoa currently in achieving these critical aspirations. The financial burdens of committing to rehabilitation of existing built form are real, and are simply too much for many projects. Hills Residences succeeds due to the tenacity of Stark Property and







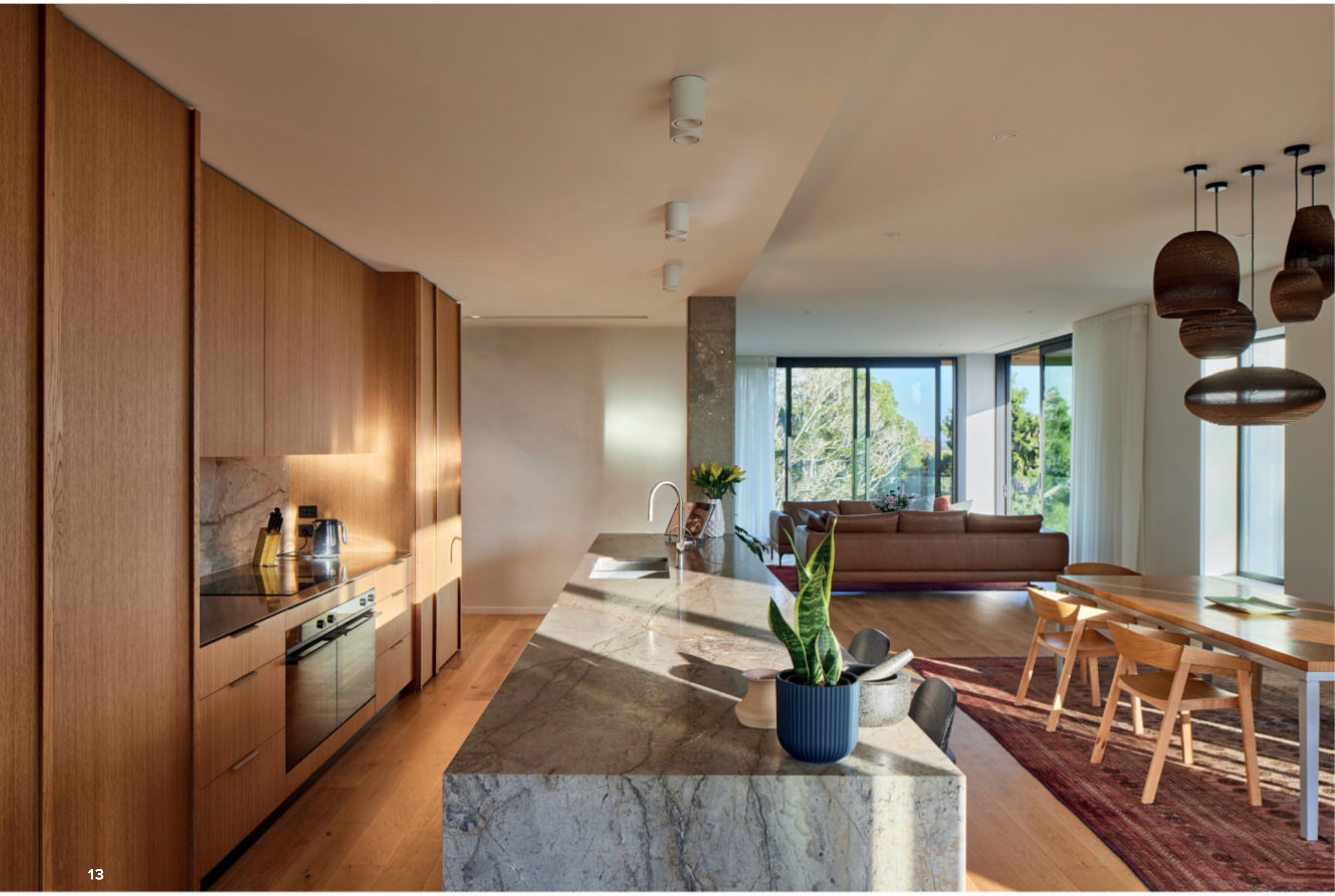


08 Attention to storage and flow ensures each apartment feels roomy.

09 Owners could choose to customise their interior finishes and fittings.

10–11 Bookshelves are built in and living areas are designed as open plan.

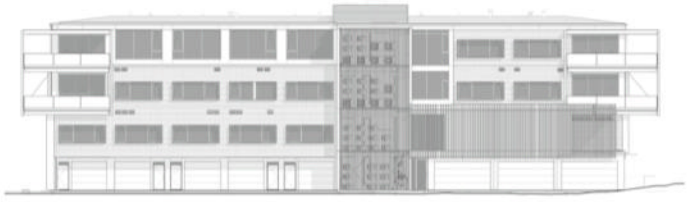
12 Layouts enable space for work offices or guest stays.



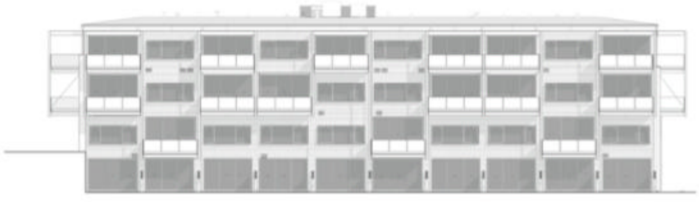
to being part of a bigger master plan that softens the blow. How we make this easy – normal even – and build on these first steps is the big question.

Smith farewells me to join the body corp for celebratory drinks and I wander off to find my bike, passing that heritage building on the corner on the way. What's happening with that old thing, I hear you ask. Its contemporary surroundings may be a far cry from its origins as the headquarters of the Waikato County Council, built in 1910 at a time when Hamilton was barely fighting off Cambridge for biggest regional settlement. But with a complete structural overhaul and new paint job it will be here for a while yet, linking Hills Village with older stories and speaking to continual change in a city that is just getting started. Just don't rely on 'camerated concrete' for longevity.

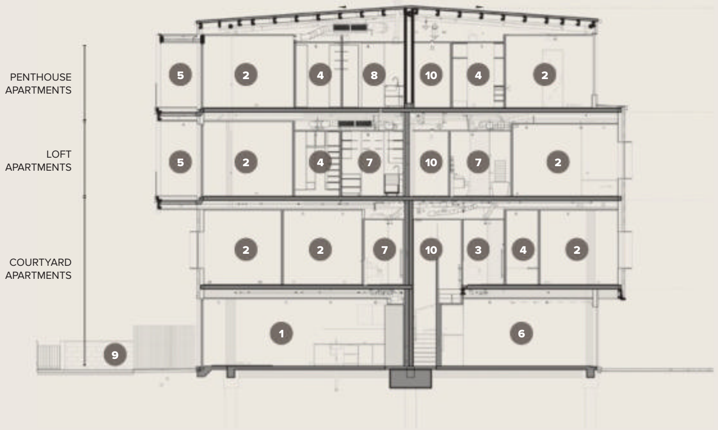
13 Living space in the western penthouse.



SOUTH ELEVATION

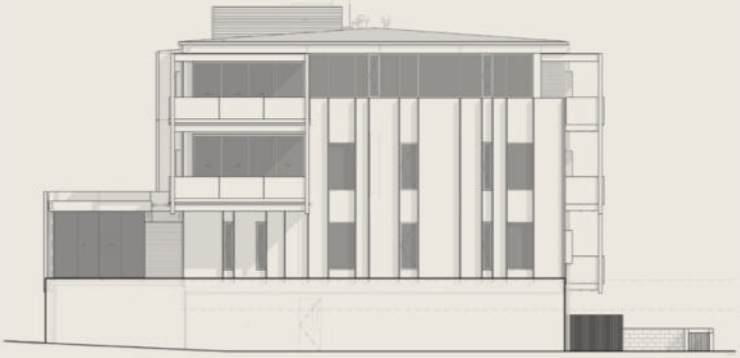


NORTH ELEVATION

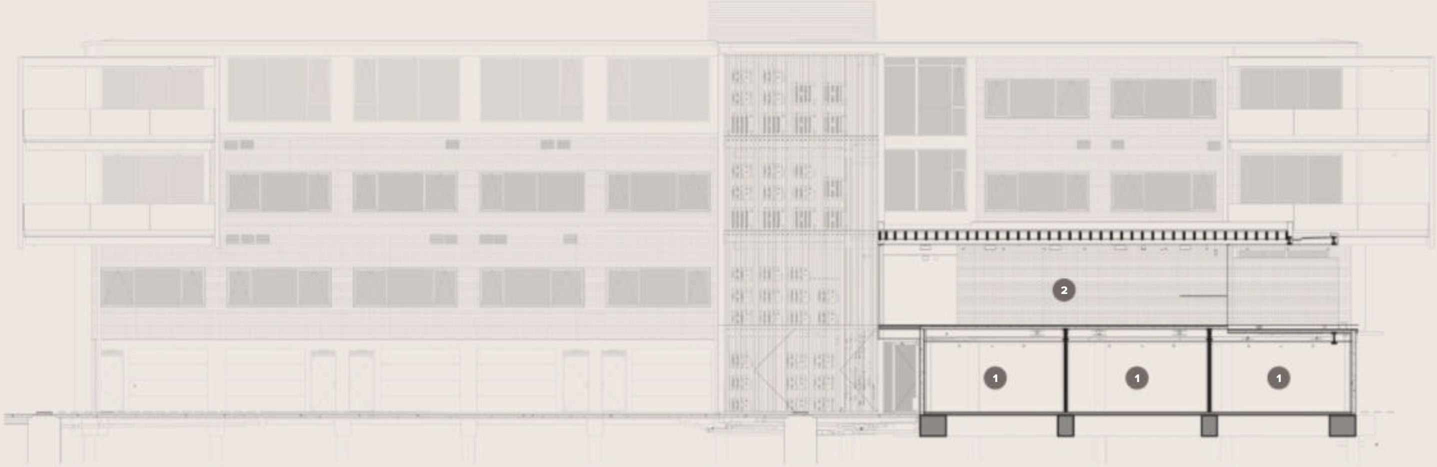

PENTHOUSE APARTMENTS
5 2 4 8 10 4 2
LOFT APARTMENTS
5 2 4 7 10 7 2
COURTYARD APARTMENTS
2 2 7 10 3 4 2
1 6
9

CROSS SECTION

1 LIVING
2 BEDROOM
3 EN SUITE
4 WALK IN ROBE
5 BALCONY
6 GARAGE
7 BATHROOM
8 SCULLERY
9 COURTYARD
10 CIRCULATION

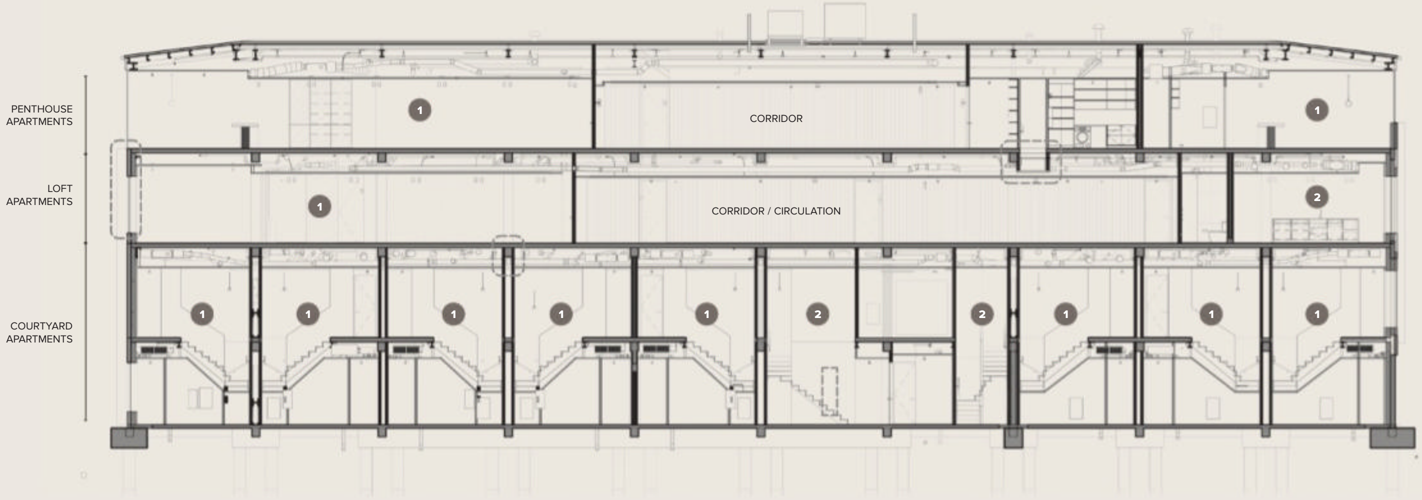


EAST ELEVATION



NORTH SECTION

1 GARAGE
2 FIRST FLOOR ENTRANCE

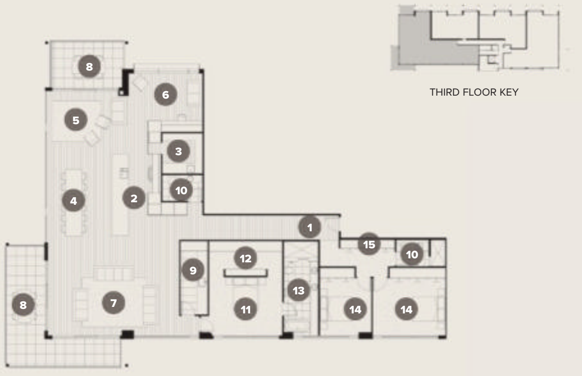

PENTHOUSE APARTMENTS
1
CORRIDOR
1
LOFT APARTMENTS
1
CORRIDOR / CIRCULATION
2
COURTYARD APARTMENTS
1 1 1 1 1 2 2 1 1 1

SOUTH LONG SECTION

1 THREE-BED APARTMENT
2 TWO-BED APARTMENT

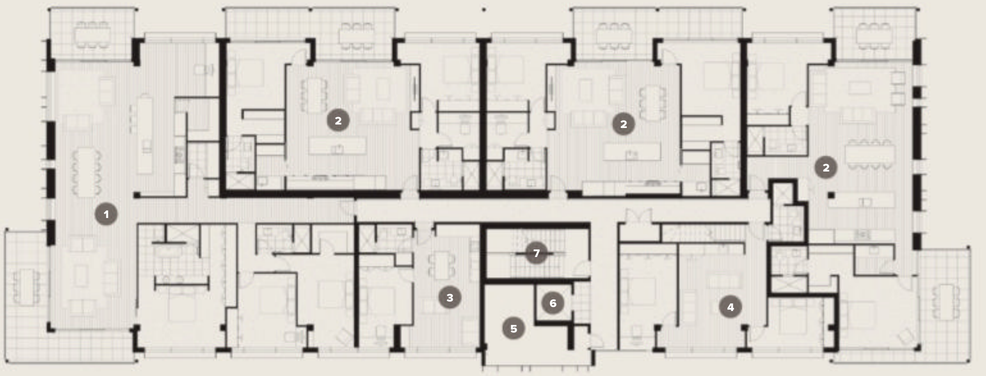
Project Information

LOCATION 1 Clyde Street, Hamilton East
FLOOR AREA 4200m^2
STOREYS Four
TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation: 26 months
Construction: 20 months
CLIENT Stark Property
ARCHITECT Edwards White Architects
PROJECT TEAM Daniel Smith, Brian White, Georgia Peacocke, Will Weavers, Luke Grbin
BUILDER SJR Builders
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER BCD Group
HYDRAULIC ENGINEER Flow Consulting
MECHANICAL ENGINEER Condair
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER Innerscape
LANDSCAPE Quinn Landscaping
INTERIORS Edwards White Architects
LIGHTING Innerscape, Edwards White Architects
QUANTITY SURVEYOR Jewkes Boyd Cost Management
GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANT HD Geo
PLANNING CONSULTANT Feathers Planning
FIRE CONSULTANT BCD Group
ACOUSTICS BBA
PROJECT MANAGER Stark Property
ROOF Roofing Industries
BRICK CLADDING Brickworks New Zealand
VERTICAL CLADDING Duragroove Innova fibre cement
ALUMINIUM CLADDING Paneltec
WEATHERBOARD Rosenfeld Kidson
SOFFITS James Hardie Villaboard
FLOORING VidaSpace engineered oak
ENTRY DOOR FINISH Plytech Birch
ALUMINIUM LOUVRES Insol Solaris
LOUVRE SYSTEM Monkeytoe
WINDOWS APL ThermalHeart
GLASS BALUSTRADE FIXINGS Euroglass
ACOUSTIC INSULATION PANELS GreenStuf Acoustic Soffit Liner
PAVERS Tile Space
FINISHES Dryden WoodOil



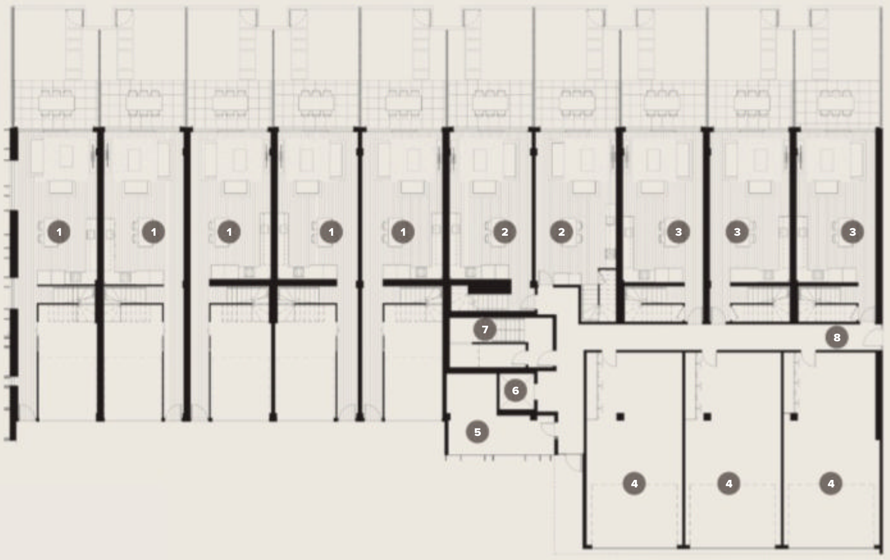
PENTHOUSE EXAMPLE PLAN

1 ENTRY
2 KITCHEN
3 SCULLERY
4 DINING
5 LIVING
6 SNUG
7 LOUNGE
8 BALCONY
9 LAUNDRY
10 BATHROOM
11 MASTER
12 WARDROBE
13 EN SUITE
14 BEDROOM
15 STORAGE



SECOND-FLOOR PLAN

1 THREE-BED APARTMENT
2 TWO-BED APARTMENT
3 SINGLE-BED APARTMENT
4 TWO-BED SPLIT-LEVEL APARTMENT
5 SERVICES
6 ELEVATOR
7 STAIR CORE



GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

1 COURTYARD APARTMENT TYPE 1
2 COURTYARD APARTMENT TYPE 2
3 COURTYARD APARTMENT TYPE 3
4 PENTHOUSE GARAGES
5 SERVICES
6 ELEVATOR
7 STAIR CORE
8 LINK TO BASEMENT CAR PARK

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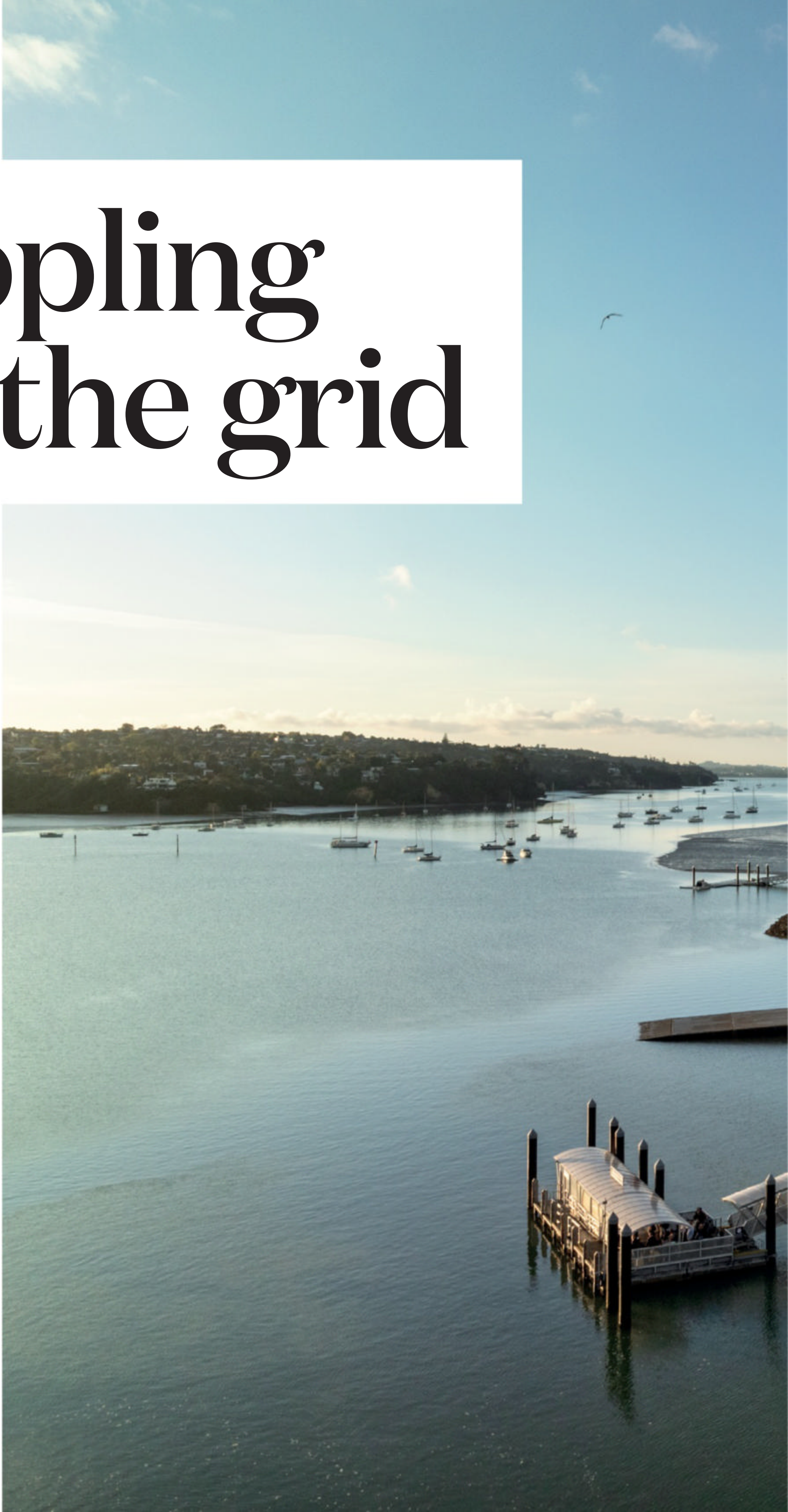
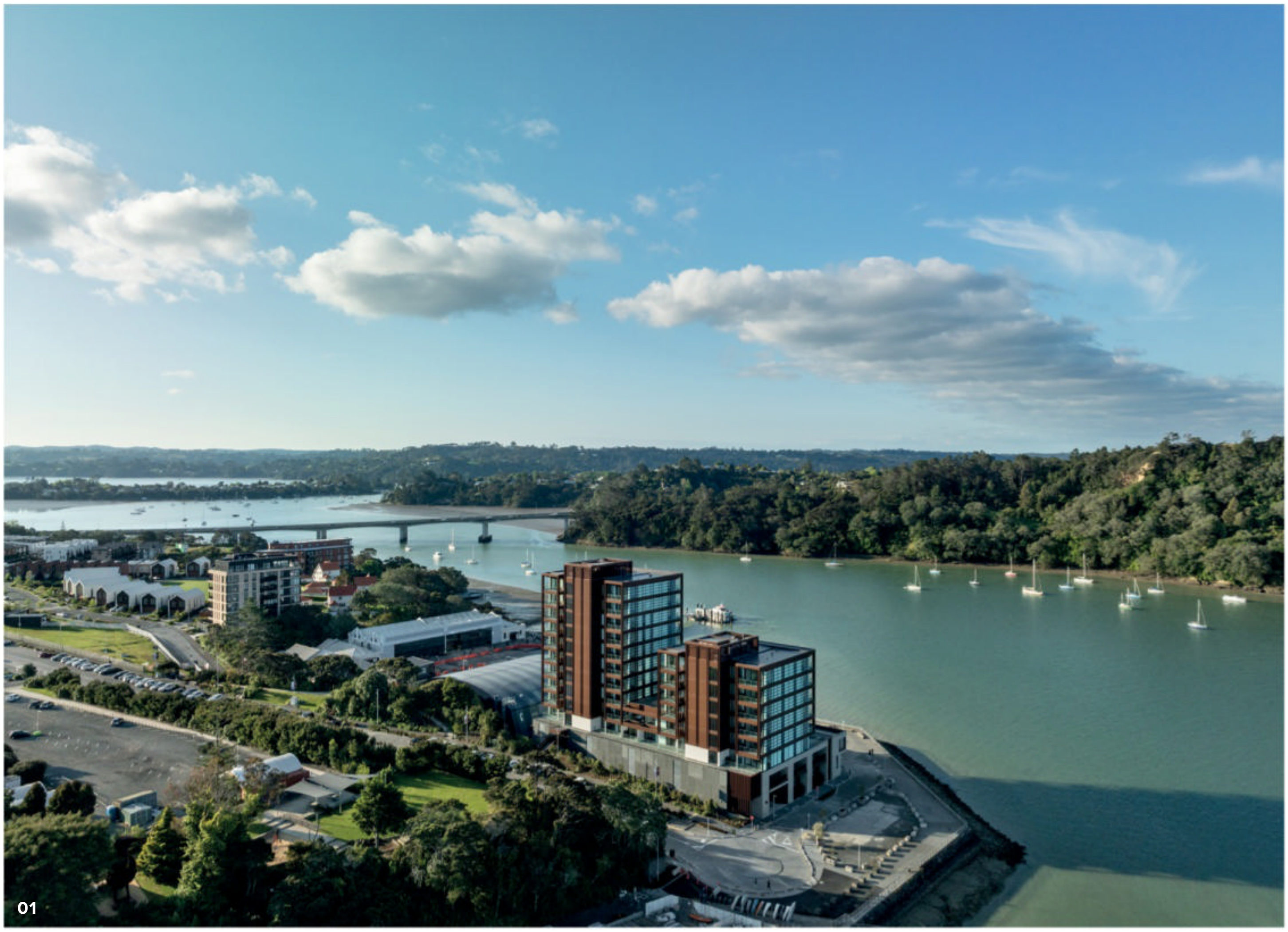
Grappling with the grid

Chris Barton visits the **Catalina Bay Apartments** in Hobsonville Point by **Architectus** and finds meticulous planning, embracing and disrupting the grid.

Photography
SIMON DEVITT



RIGHT In an idyllic location, the apartments are sited close to the Hobsonville Point ferry terminal.



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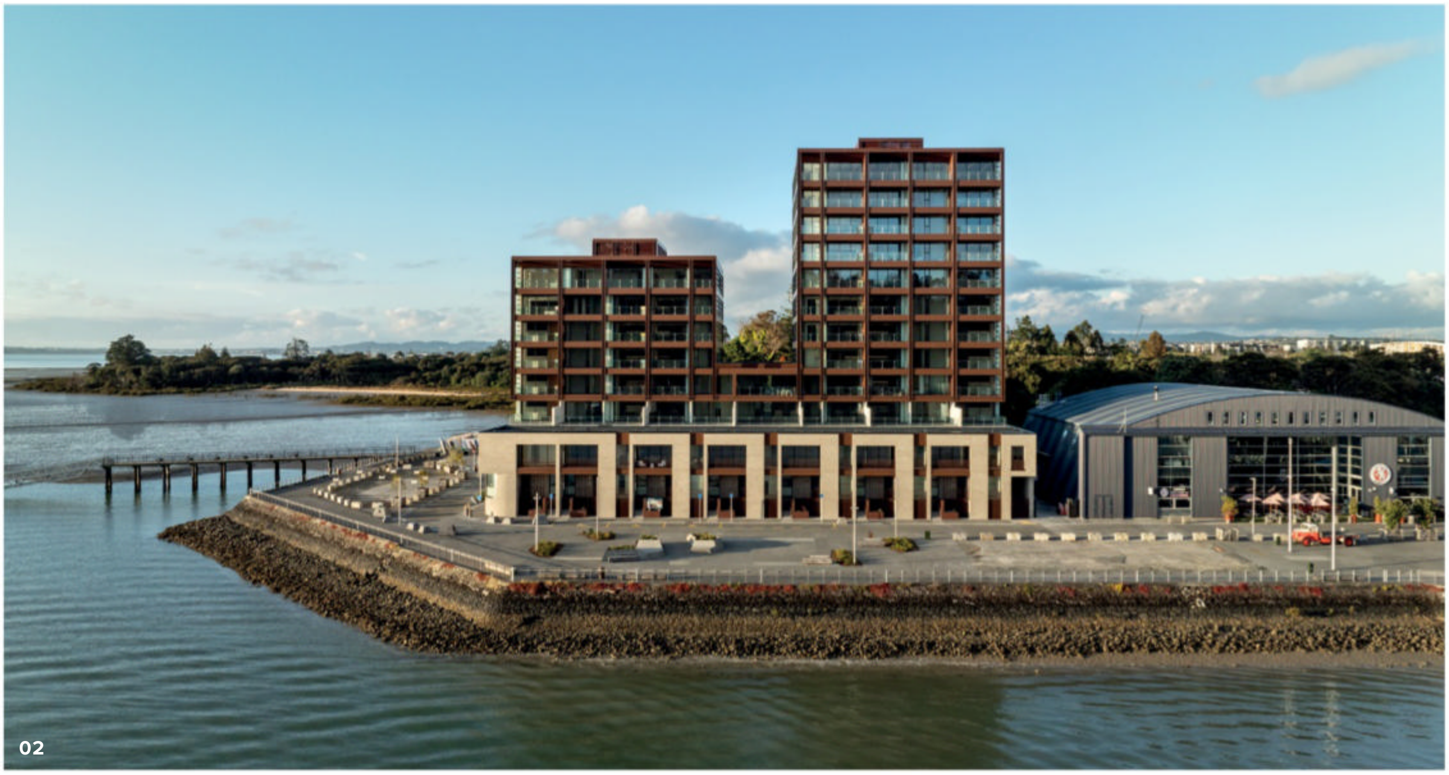

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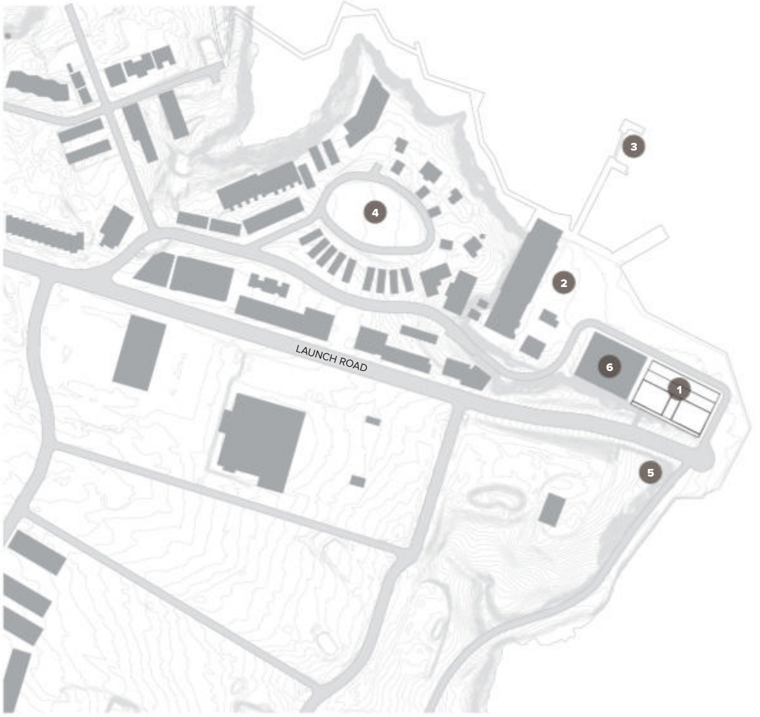


SITE PLAN

1 CATALINA BAY APARTMENTS
2 THE LANDING
3 FERRY WHARF
4 MARLBOROUGH CRESCENT
5 HARRIER POINT PARK
6 SUNDERLAND HANGAR

AS WE WALK DOWNHILL ON LAUNCH ROAD towards the water, the morning sun is shining, a surging Waitematā tide is high and the cicadas are in full voice – a summer din, signalling all is well, at least in this idyllic-looking part of the world. On our left are the Catalina Bay Apartments at Hobsonville Point – two towers by Architectus rising from the seabed below.

I hazard a description.

"It's very modernist?"

"Yes," says Architectus principal Patrick Clifford.

"Almost brutalist?"

"Woah."

I've gone too far. "By that I mean it's very honest in its expression of structure and materials," I scramble.

"I would say muscular; it's got a bit of strength," suggests Architectus associate principal Shane Parker.

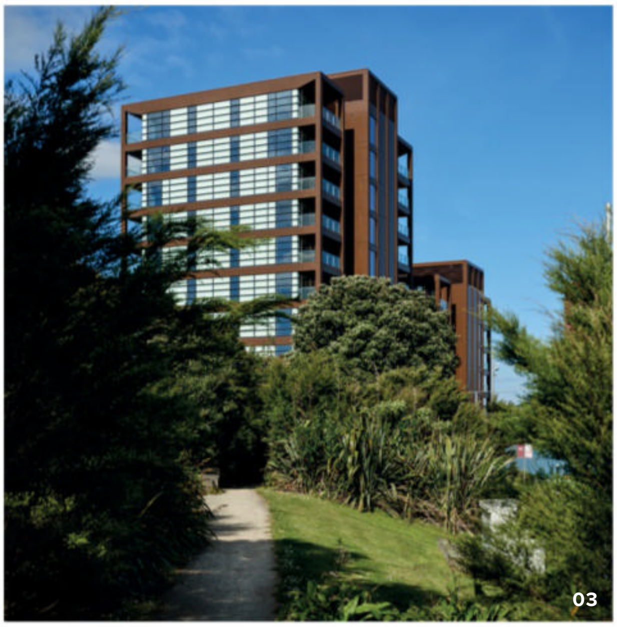
"It's got quite a strong grid," agrees Clifford.

It has. An underlying steel frame is clearly expressed on some façades with a repeating 5.5m beam span on the north and south elevations, strongly visible in the balcony modules, and an 8.5m repeating span on the east and west elevations. Columns between floor and ceiling beams are 2.7m high. All framing elements are covered in a brown aluminium cladding system. "We are in a marine environment," says Clifford. "We wanted something that's clearly metallic, not rusty, but quite weathered."

On our right as we continue downhill is *Estuarine*, the Louise Purvis gabion wall artwork commissioned by the Hobsonville Land Company in 2015 – tubular gabion baskets filled with red scoria and snaking 70m against a backdrop of a huge grey scoria gabion retaining wall. Ideally, it would have been nice to have gabion baskets at the base of the apartments says Parker. It wasn't to be. Although, he says, there was some effort to make the pre-cast concrete base – not quite béton brut – look tonally similar.

We climb the stairs up to the retained, raised playground of Harrier Point Park and take in the view through the towers and across the upper Waitematā Harbour to a just-visible trig station atop a bushy hill beside the Greenhithe Bridge. The view – actually a protected viewshaft mandated by the area's precinct controls – had somehow been forgotten in the design process and, for a moment, threatened to derail the whole project. At that stage, the apartments were one long rectangular block complying with a 27m-height limit plane.

"The forgotten viewshaft was actually really good. It rescaled the buildings," says Clifford. "We took out the bit in the middle and put it on top. It reorganised the mass." Somehow, in removing the middle of the building, exceeding the height limit either side was approved. Hence, the two towers: one to the east has six floor levels, 33.5m high, and the other to the west has 10 levels and is 47m high. In the process, the building acquired more façade to provide more views for the apartments. Most of the 82 one, two and three-bedroom units interlocked within the building's grid are dual aspect, with some, the corner units, having the luxury of triple aspect.



01 The view from Harrier Point Park shows the project's protected viewshaft.

02 The two-level wharf terraces are aligned with the height of the Sunderland Hangar doors. The courtyard apartments look over the top of the terraces.

03 The view to the building across the Launch Road Reserve.

The interiors of the apartments are spacious. There's a range of open-plan kitchen-dining-living configurations, each opening with sliding floor-to-ceiling glazed doors to a generous 2.3m-deep by 5.5m-wide verandah – an indented outdoor room with, in every case, a spectacular upper-harbour view. By far the best are those with an eastern aspect, providing a long, lingering view down the harbour to the city. The verandah arrangement, combined with dual-aspect apartments, provides shade for the living spaces and enables natural through-ventilation, supplemented by individual heat pumps also located on the verandah decks.

As we reach the bottom of Launch Road, we're beside the water on a huge platform space just above the high-tide mark, first used in 1927 by the gargantuan Sunderland seaplanes and, between 1943 and 1953, by the Royal New Zealand Airforce Catalina seaplanes. This is the best way to arrive at this building – not by car but by boat: specifically, via the Hobsonville ferry that drops you at the end of a long wharf, just five minutes' walk from the apartments' wharf-side entry next to the Sunderland Hangar. The Hangar now operates as a restaurant space for craft brewer, Little Creatures.

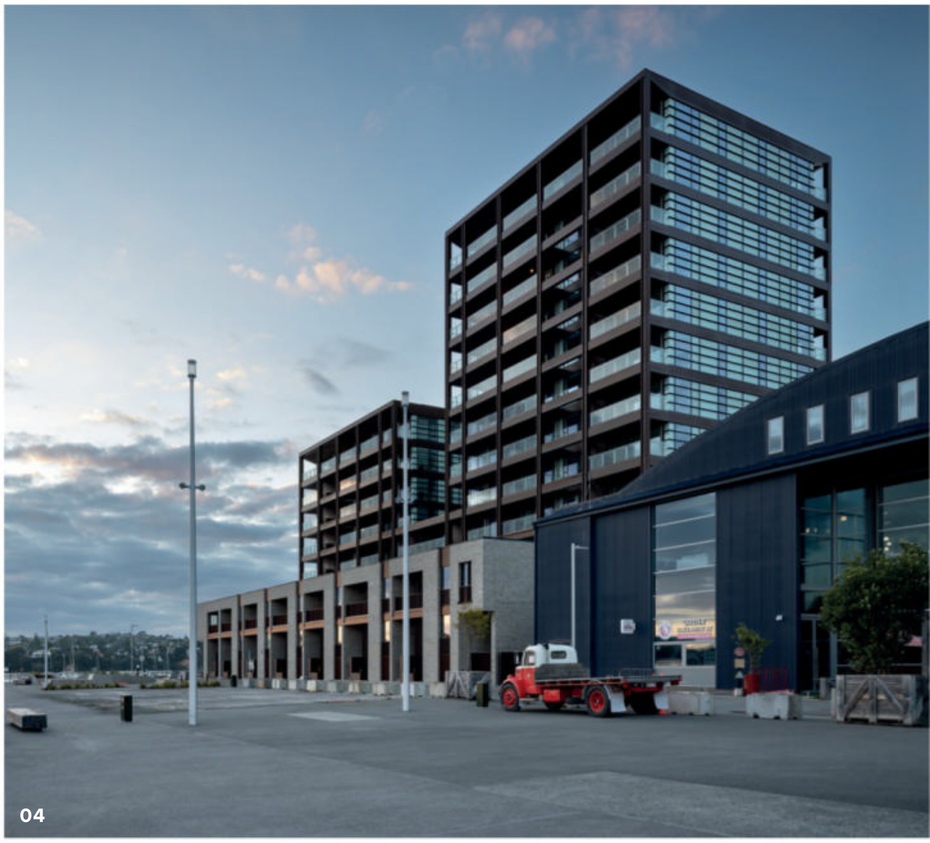
Here you can appreciate the way in which the apartments are decoupled from the ground plane with a two-level plinth comprising a row of nine two-storey 'wharf terraces' townhouses, clad in concrete brick. The height of the townhouses is aligned with the top of the huge, now-folding 8.9m-high glass doors of the adjacent Sunderland Hangar, built in 1939.

Behind the wharf terraces and supported on 51 piles sunk 15m into the seabed are two levels of concrete floors for 127 car parks. The end result is a ground-level row of nine townhouses at the base of the podium and 10 'courtyard apartments' on top of the podium looking out over the roofs of the townhouses. In the towers above are 61 upper apartments and two penthouses.

All this precision comes at a cost. In February, at the time of writing, developer Willis Bond has sold 65 out of 82 apartments. A one-bedroom 56m^2 unit with a car park is on the market at $995,000. The 141m^2 penthouses cost between $4.5 million and $5 million. Townhouses are around $2 million.

Clifford says the building took its gridded form in response to the existing buildings around its base – the Sunderland Hangar, the former Fabric Building (now a café) where fabric for the seaplanes was made, the Catalina Workshops building, the Armoury and, in particular, the GRP building where technicians worked with glass-reinforced plastics.

"Even though this is a bigger building, the pieces of building that existed on the site are quite defined,"



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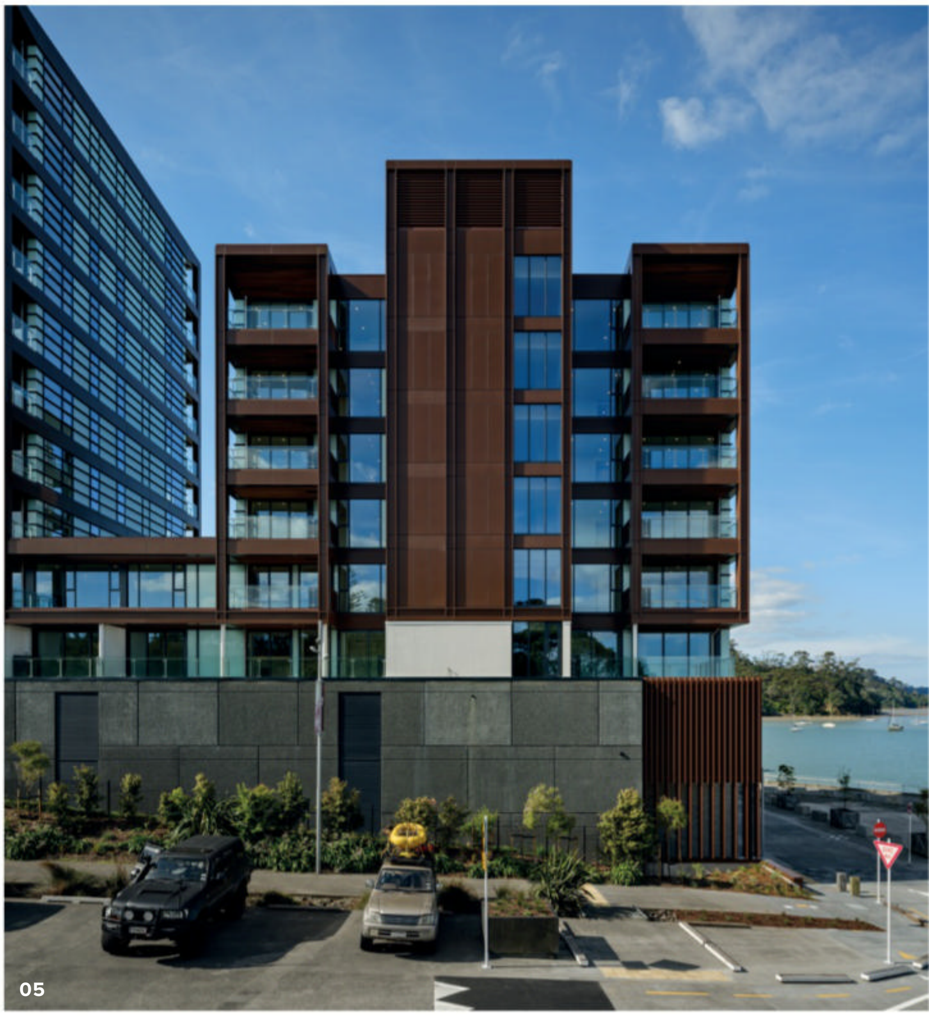

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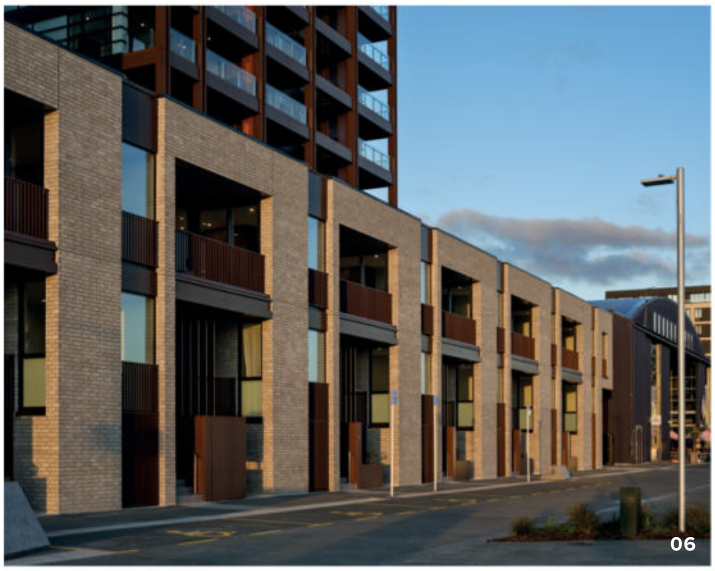
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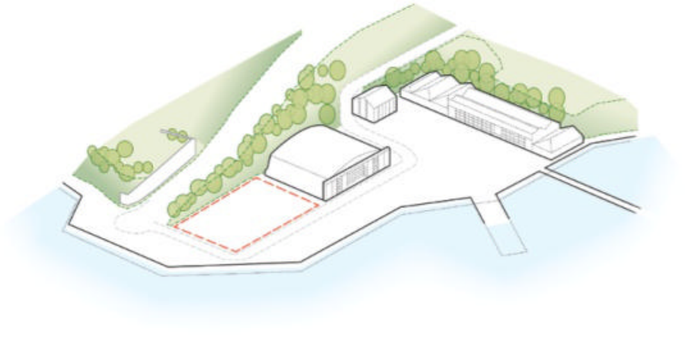
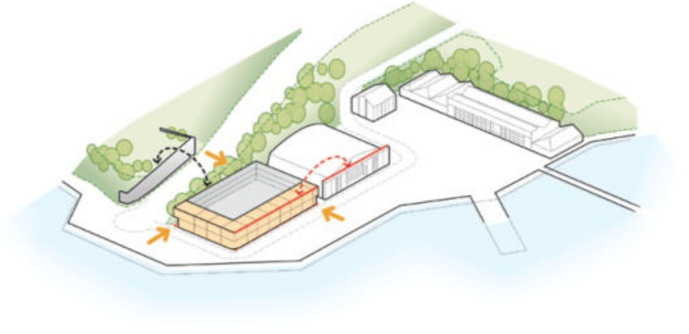
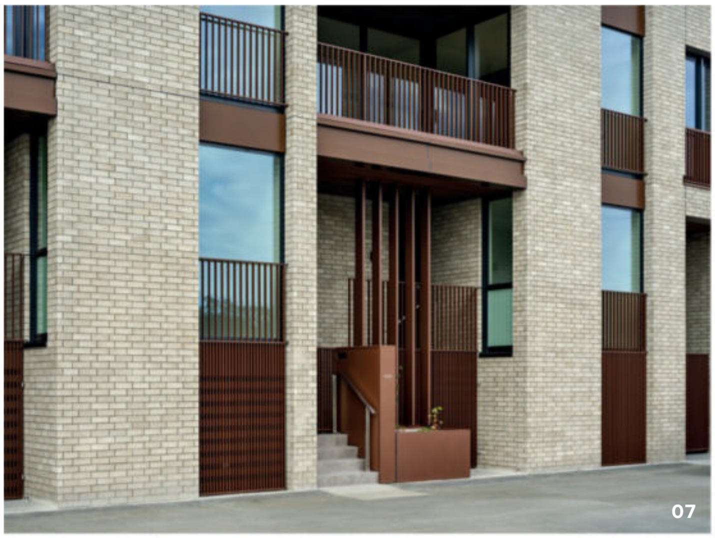

PROPOSED SITE AND CONTEXT


PODIUM: ACTIVATION TO PUBLIC REALM AND ALIGNED DATUMS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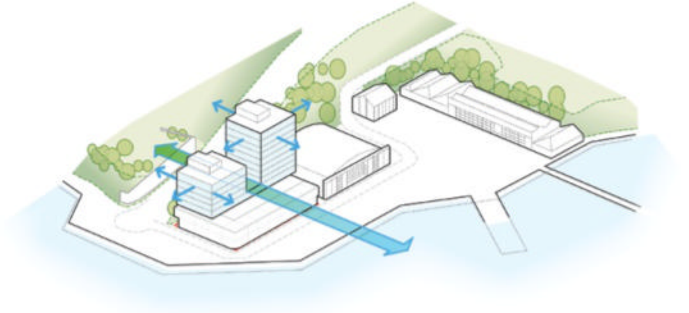
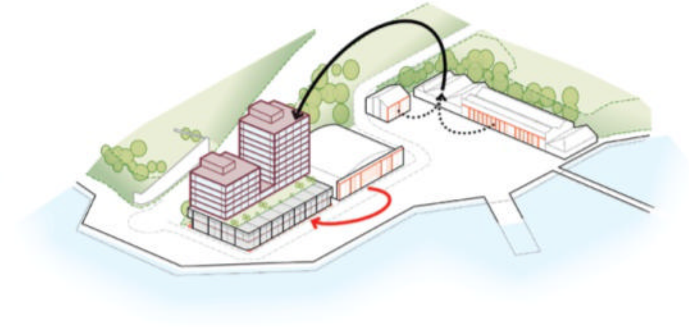

APARTMENTS: SIGHT LINES, MASSING AND VIEW OPTIMISATION


CONTEXTUAL PROPORTIONS: STRUCTURE, MATERIALITY AND ARTICULATION

08

04 The grid expressed on the apartment towers' east and west façades is different from that on the northern balcony façade.

05 The view at street level, from the south, shows the pre-cast concrete façade to the parking floors.

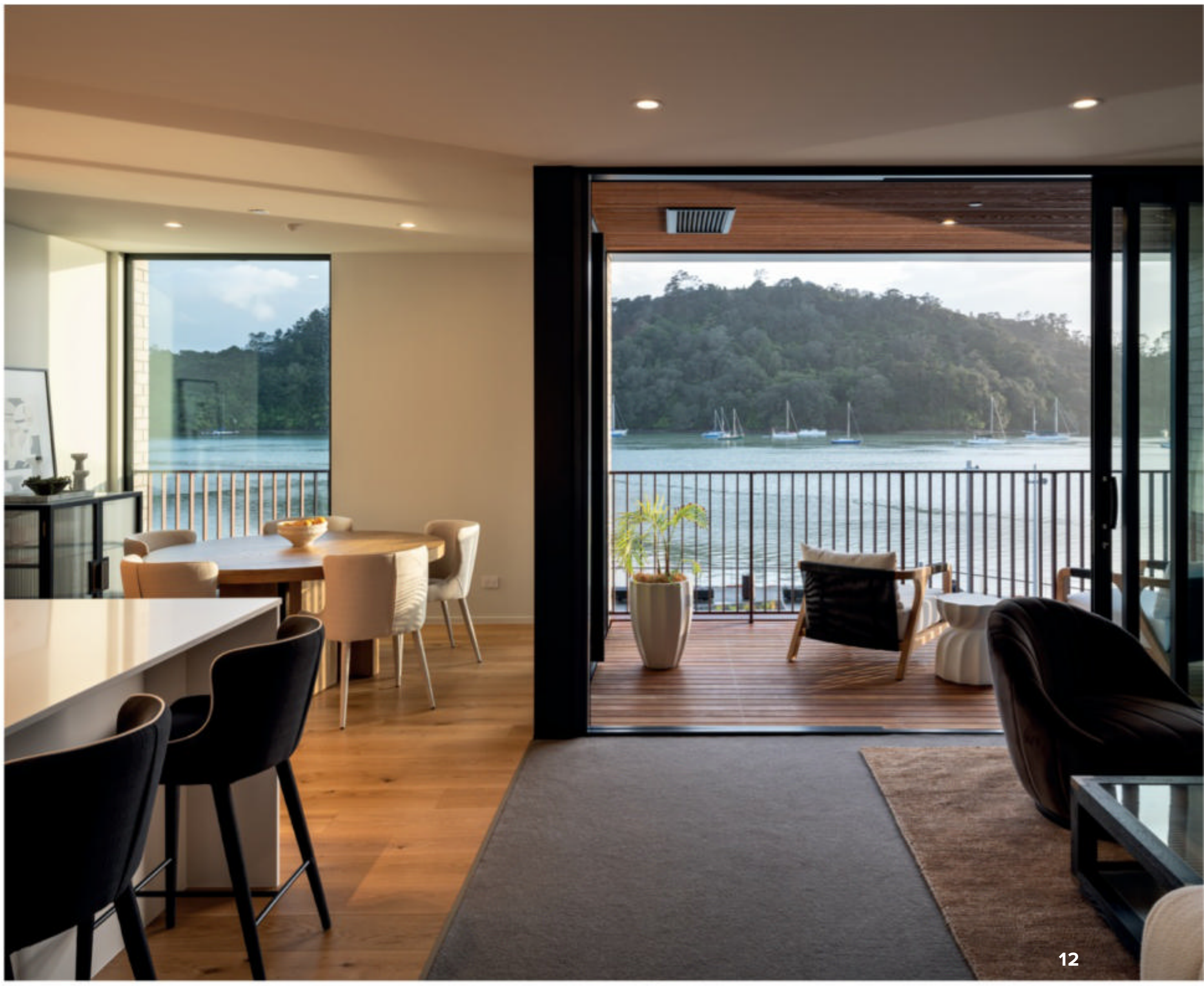
06–07 The wharf terraces have indented entries along the street.

08 The corner unit of the wharf terraces.

09 An upper-level corner apartment interior.

10 An apartment bedroom.

11 The verandah ceilings on the top-floor upper-level apartment balconies lift skywards.



12

says Clifford. “They are quite strong grids. We wanted to make some reference to those: something that was quite grounded and blocky.”

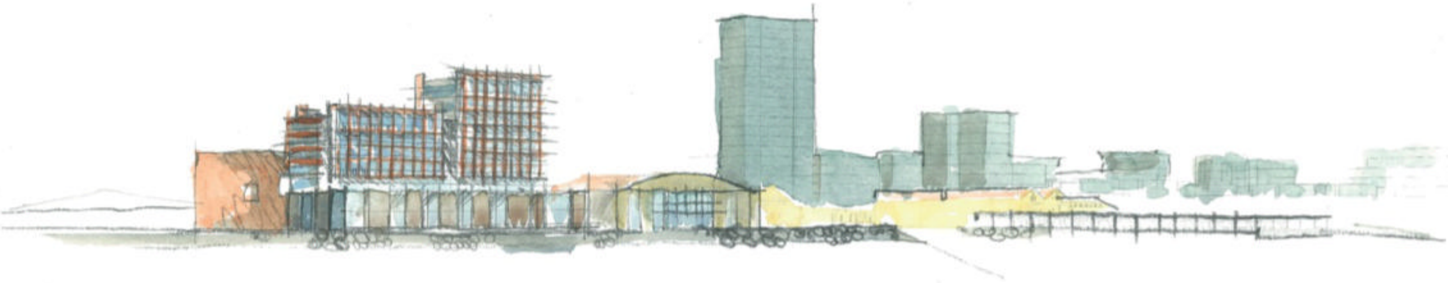
Adherence to the grid, adds Clifford, is a key to working out the complexities of apartment design in terms of efficiency of structure, materials and circulation.

Is it also important at times to break free of it?

“I don’t think we are slavish to grid,” he says. “I generally like that different orientations do not have to be the same.” He points to the east and west elevations where the glazing is a free-for-all mix of different-sized panes: some transparent, some translucent.

While the Catalina Bay Apartments, with all that concrete and steel, won’t win any awards for embodied carbon sustainability, they do achieve a 5 Homestar rating for operational residential sustainability. They also seem built to last, as long as sea-level rise doesn’t change the coastline too severely in Auckland’s inner harbour. They are a bravura assertion of working the grid to deliver a precise and impressive marine aesthetic, belonging to its place.

12 This wharf terrace living space is on the second floor and looks across the upper harbour.



FERRY APPROACH SKETCH

Project Information

LOCATION 6 Boundary Road, Hobsonville Point

SITE AREA 2480m²

FLOOR AREA 14,750m²

STOREYS 13

TIME SCHEDULE

Design, documentation: 12 months

Construction: 26 months

ARCHITECT Architectus

PROJECT TEAM Patrick Clifford, Shane Parker, James Craig, Matthew Finn, Maggie Xu, Frank Coleman, Michael Thomson, Severin Soder, Rebecca Lawton, Lusi Vete, Warren Nicholson, Liam Donaldson, Sara Nazem, Chirag Jindal, John Strand, Paul Millard, Kevin Park

BUILDER LT McGuinness

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER BGT Structures

MEP ENGINEER Mott MacDonald

LANDSCAPING O2 Landscapes

INTERIORS Architectus

LIGHTING iLight

QUANTITY SURVEYOR Kingstons

GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANT KGA Geotechnical

FIRE CONSULTANT Jensen Hughes

ACOUSTICS Marshall Day Acoustics

PROJECT MANAGER RCP

FIRE PROTECTION CONSULTANT Protech Design

HOMESTAR CONSULTANT eCcubed Building Workshop

MAINTENANCE ACCESS CONSULTANT Alta Safety

LIFT CONSULTANT Vertrans

SEISMIC ENGINEER KCL Engineering Services

ROOFS RoofLogic

CLADDING GIB, Canterbury Clay Bricks, Symonite, Sto

EXTERIOR DOORS/WINDOWS APL Window Solutions

FLOORING Forté, Bremworth, Jacobsen, Tile Space

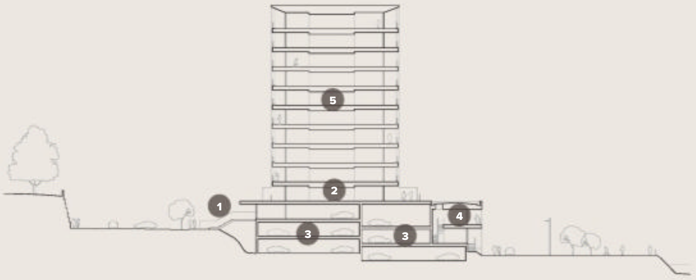
DOORS Hallmark, Metalbilt

WALLS Korok, GIB, ProRoc

INSULATION Autex, Pink Batts

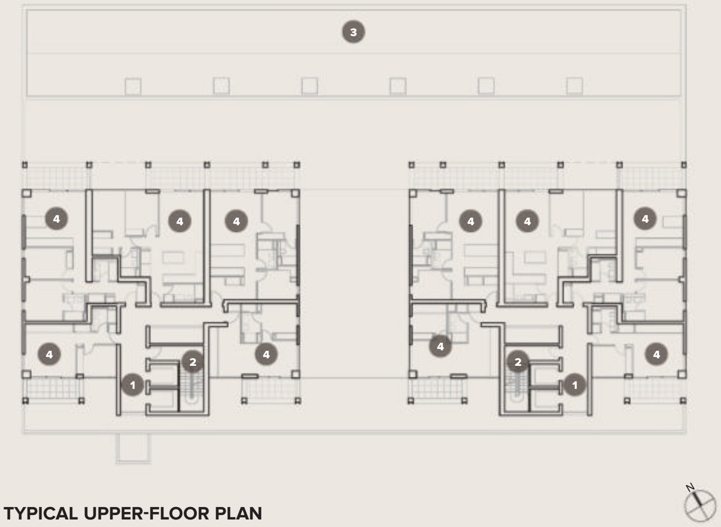
PAINT Resene

HARDWARE Allegion



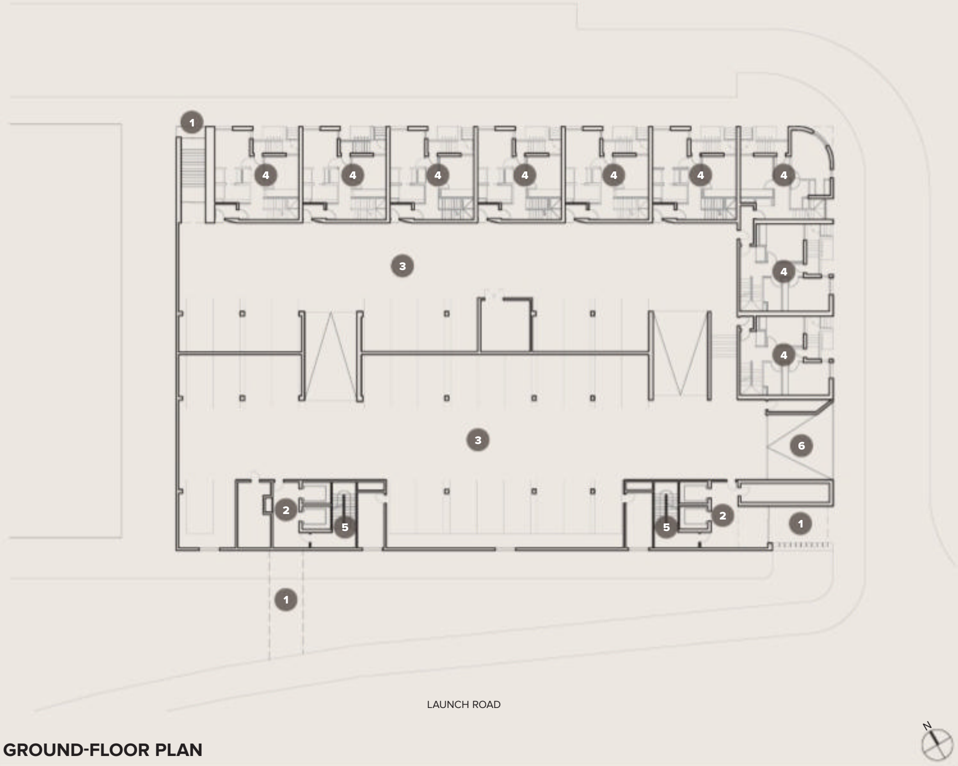
CROSS-SECTION

1 ENTRY
2 COURTYARD APARTMENTS
3 CAR PARK
4 WHARF TERRACES
5 UPPER APARTMENTS



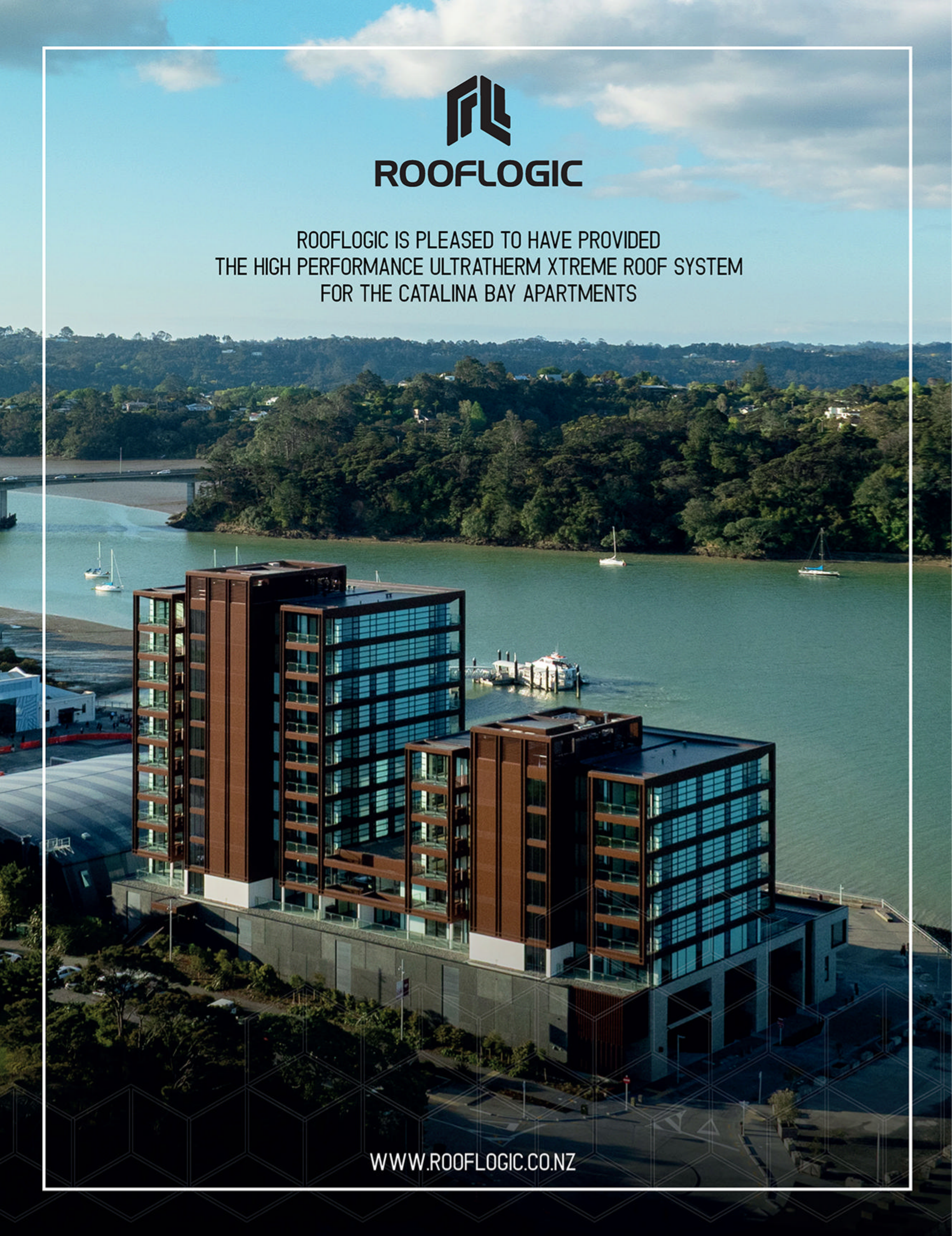
TYPICAL UPPER-FLOOR PLAN

1 CORE
2 STAIRS
3 WHARF TERRACES
4 APARTMENT UNITS



GROUND-FLOOR PLAN

1 ENTRY
2 CORE
3 CAR PARK
4 WHARF TERRACE
5 STAIRS
6 ENTRANCE TO CAR PARK



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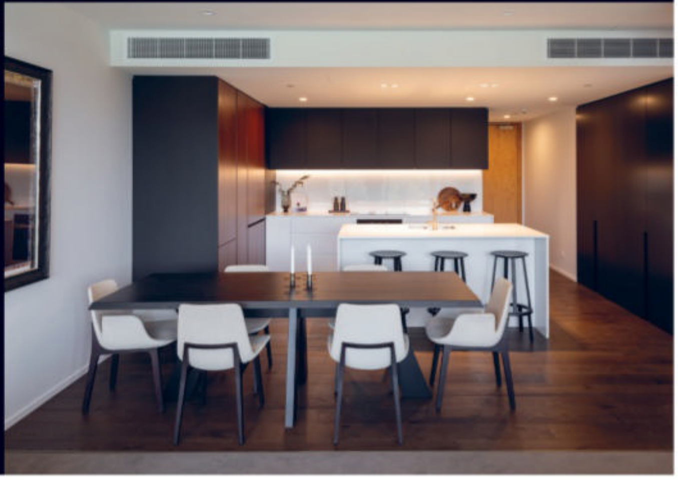

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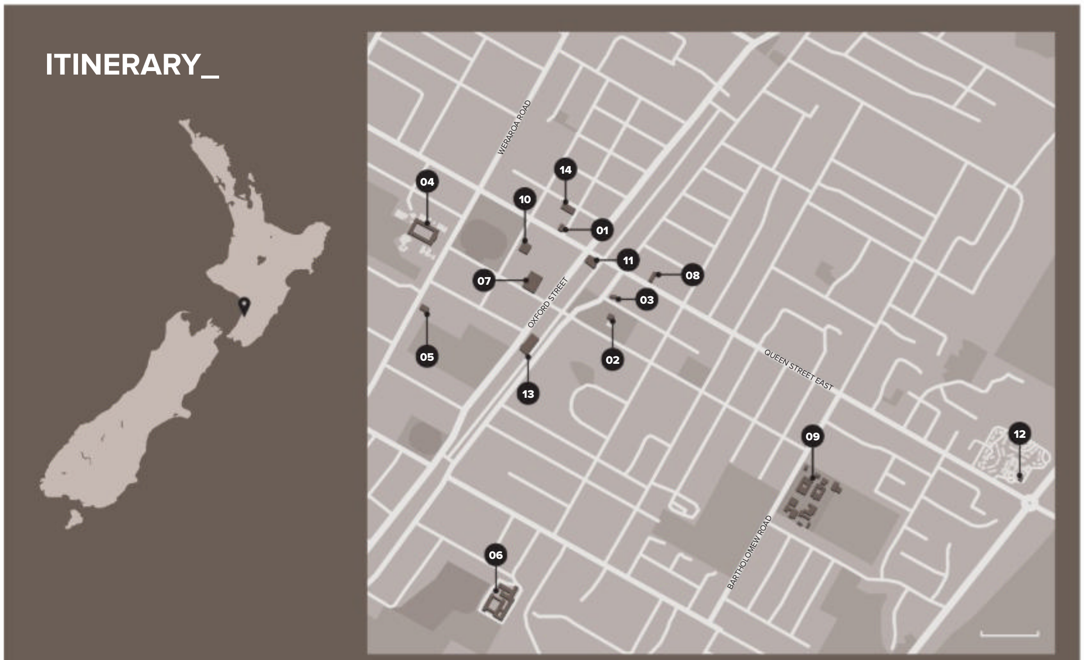


City Guide: Levin

Words: Andrew Barrie

The jewel of the Horowhenua, a fertile band between the Tararua Ranges and the coast, was a string of shallow lakes that served as an abundant food source. The area around Lake Horowhenua was inhabited by Muaūpoko iwi, although their occupation was disrupted during the Musket Wars by a bloody conflict with Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Toa led by Te Rauparaha, who would establish a base further down the coast. The advent of the rail line in the 1880s – the town is named after William Levin, a director of the Wellington and Manawatū Railway Company – was critical to local development. Like much of the country, the town was literally carved from the forest; the first key business was sawmilling and the second the tilling of the fertile soil that lay under the trees. As the land was cleared, the town developed as a service centre for agriculture and, later, horticulture in the surrounding area. The post-war period saw a boom in light manufacturing, particularly textile-related industries, which, in turn, collapsed in the economic deregulation of the 1980s. Other later governmental moves, such as the closure of Kimberley Hospital and the Horticultural Research Station, would further dent the local economy. Despite these ups and downs, what remained on a steady downward arc was the lake, subject to abuses from which it is only now being allowed to recover.

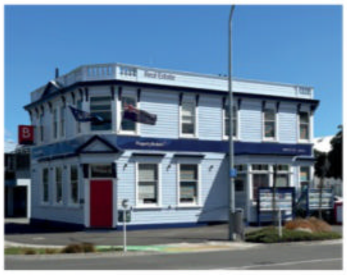
Perhaps surprisingly, a thousand-page global survey book called *Contemporary Architects*, published in 1987, included two buildings in Levin. But Levin is a reminder of the fragility of architectural achievement. Even at the peak of its economic vitality, the advent of a noteworthy piece of public architecture has occurred in Levin only once or twice a decade. This relative scarcity is exacerbated by a driving but hit-and-miss force in small-town life: the desire for ‘progress’. Many of the most noteworthy buildings produced across Levin’s history have since been demolished: the Carnegie library, a John Campbell-designed post office, churches, a modern hospital and several generations of municipal offices by leading big-city firms.

Kiwis might see Levin as emblematic of small-town life but it’s not that small – it is currently 31st on the list of the nation’s biggest urban areas. That said, there aren’t – or aren’t now – any nationally significant buildings in town. It is, though, knitted into our architectural history with buildings by and connections to important firms. It also demonstrates in microcosm a key change that has taken place across the last half century. The local institutions – particularly churches, but also power boards, community hall committees and clubs – that historically commissioned architects to populate our towns with noteworthy public buildings have largely lost the capacity to do so. Even quasi-local institutions like banks and post offices have lost the inclination to build. Except in the case of a few resort towns, architecture seems to be withdrawing from small towns. Towns are losing the demographic or economic punch for community-level development, and struggle to attract governmental or corporate entities with the wherewithal for building projects of any ambition.

Declaring deficits in our national architecture has long been a favourite of commentators, from Samuel Hurst Seager’s 1900 complaint that our architectural art had seen “no true development” to The Group’s Bill Wilson’s post-war declaration that “There is no architecture in New Zealand.” Over the space of a generation, Levin has seen more important buildings demolished than built but we need not declare time of death. The quiescence of Levin and communities like it should, though, alert architects to the way that their energies are being diverted from supporting communities. Architectural gems must remain one of the charms of small-town life.

01

1905
Bank of Australasia
28 Queen Street
Crichton & McKay

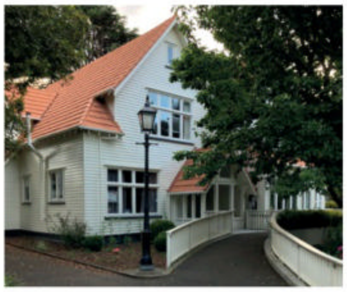


Crichton & McKay was amongst the most active and successful Wellington firms of its time, training a number of significant architects, and starting a lineage of practices that continued under various names until very recently – successor firm Bulleyment Fortune Architects completed the Police Station next door on Salisbury Street in 1994. The firm produced houses and commercial buildings all around the lower North Island, including branches for a number of different banks, often producing more than one bank in a town. They also worked, for example, on the Bank of New Zealand building still standing directly across Queen Street.

02

1922

Thompson House
4 Kent Street
Clere & Williams

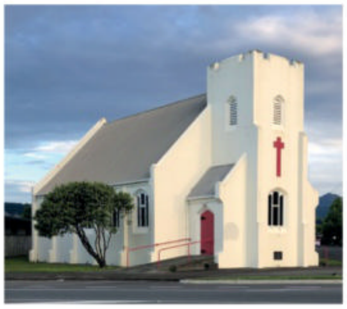


In a long and prolific career, Frederick de Jersey Clere was active across the lower North Island. He is best known for his churches – his 1897 wooden structure for St Mary's in Levin was built just a stone's throw from Thompson House – but he produced commercial and civic buildings, as well as houses. This house, built for local doctor James Thompson and now Heritage New Zealand listed, was purchased by the Levin Borough Council in 1973 to become a cultural and arts centre for use by the community. Clere's St Mary's, which had been superseded by a Prouse and Wilson building, was demolished in 1977.

03

1936

St John's Methodist Church
90 Cambridge Street
Prouse & Wilson

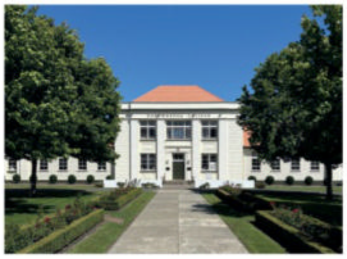


William Prouse was a key figure in the Wellington architecture scene, practising for a time as Hoggard & Prouse as well as having a stint practising with William Gummer before the formation of Gummer and Ford. Prouse came from a family of timber merchants. His uncles were key figures in the establishment of Levin, setting up a timber mill that was a key engine in the area's economic development and building the town's first Methodist church. That wooden structure was replaced by this brick and stucco building. Fun fact: in 1972, the church's stained-glass window featured on the five-cent Christmas stamp.

04

1940

Horowhenua College Main Building
65–73 Weraroa Road
Bertie Kelly

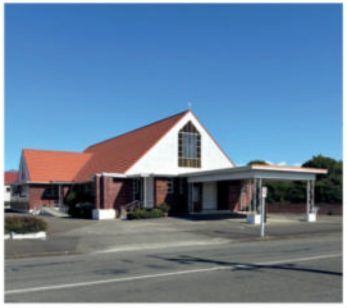


Kelly was a prolific Wellington-based architect who, as architect to the Wellington Education Board, designed numerous schools and the heritage-listed former Education Board Building (1940) at 65 Abel Smith Street, Wellington. Kelly's firm was joined in the late-1940s by John Lindsay Mair (son of Government Architect John Thomas Mair) but, after the death of his wife in the 1950s, Kelly joined the Marist Brothers in Karori – just in time to play a key role in commissioning John Scott to design the Futuna Chapel (1958). Heritage New Zealand Category 2-listed, the building is well preserved; the unfortunate fence along the street is new.

05

1956

St Joseph's Catholic Church
56 Weraroa Road
James T. Craig & Associates

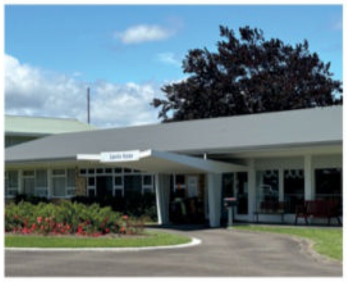


Like many Catholic churches, this complex includes a convent and a Catholic primary school. From 1843, this parish was attached to the Māori mission in Ōtaki; a side chapel in the church featuring tukutuku panels and carvings is testament to the congregation's Māori roots. The church, the tower of which was recently demolished because of seismic concerns, was designed by Lower Hutt-based James T. Craig. He is best known for projects contributing to the 1950s' expansion of Lower Hutt, and for the Clock Tower in The Square in Palmerston North; his firm would eventually become Craig Craig Moller.

06

1959

Home for War Veterans
Prouse Street
Dudley Roy, Architect

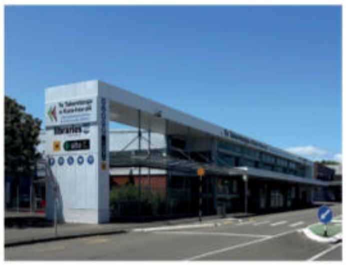


Roy had a peripatetic career, working as in-house architect for the State Advances Corporation, serving as a field engineer in the Pacific and Europe during World War II, leading his own firm and, eventually, operating in partnership with Ian Tulloch, designing conservative homes in various styles around the Wellington region. Described on its opening as "ultra-modern", the Home was designed to house 104 veterans in a combination of hospital ward and individual bedrooms; it anticipates contemporary rest homes. The building is still in relatively original condition: particularly the dining room with its dramatic folded octagonal roof. See *Architecture NZ* July 1963.

07

1965

Levin Public Library
10 Bath Street
David Taylor, Architect

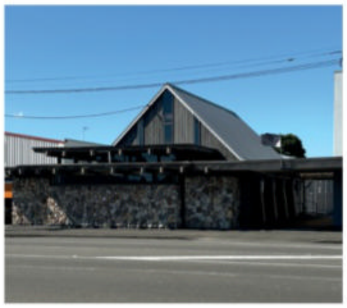


In 1911, Levin was recipient of one of the 18 New Zealand libraries funded by American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Standing on a prominent street corner, it featured a flamboyant neoclassical design by prolific Wellington-based architect James Bennie. That was demolished and replaced in the 1960s by Taylor's crisp modernist number a few steps down Bath Street. (Palmerston North-based Taylor is best known as architect of the 1977 Manawatū Art Gallery.) In 2012, this library was, in turn, absorbed into Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō, an NZIA Award-winning community centre by Designgroup Stapleton Elliott that converted the library and an adjacent vacant supermarket.

08

1972

Queen Street Gospel Chapel
541 Queen Street
Rossano Fan

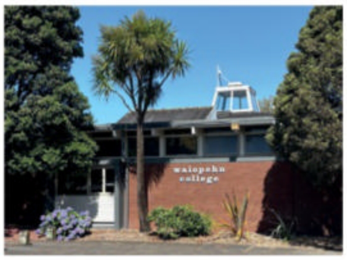


Sharp-eyed readers may have noted Michelle Wang's recent article about Rossano (Ming Ching) Fan (*Architecture NZ* Nov/Dec 2024), who emigrated from Hong Kong to Levin in the early 1960s after marrying into a local market gardening family. He spent some time working for Palmerston North architect David Taylor (see listing 7), and even a few months in the New York office of modernist maestro Marcel Breuer. His own work, mostly houses between Wellington and the Horowhenua, caught the attention of figures such as Sir Ian Athfield and Roger Walker but not, at the time at least, of our architectural media.

09

1973

Waiopehu College
74 Batholomew Road
Ministry of Works



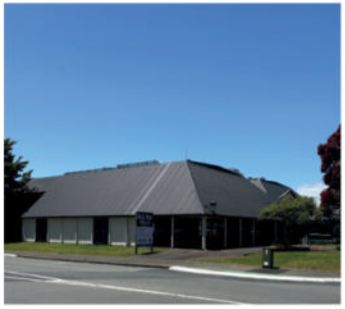
This is a well-built and largely intact example of the standard s68 high school: a pattern used in more than 50 new college campuses around the country in the 1970s. The design language was crisp: single-storey classrooms in brick or concrete block, connected with courtyards and long corridors that flipped between inside and outside along their lengths. Structure was expressed, and pop-up clerestories provided excellent natural light and ventilation in the classrooms, but the complex, low-pitched roofs and internal gutters tended to cause ongoing problems. McKenzie Higham Architects' NZIA Award-winning Horowhenua Teen Parent Unit (2015) is on the campus.

⑩

1983

New Regent Theatre

14–16 Salisbury Street
Warren and Mahoney



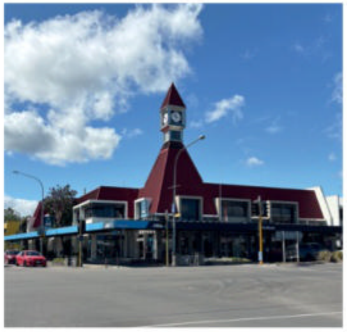
Levin's long-standing cinema was the charming Regent Theatre on Oxford Street, completed in 1926 by James Bennie. Seismically inadequate, it was demolished in 1984 (making room for Manz:Smith's Regent Court – see listing 12) and replaced by this single-screen theatre. The building is part of a series of Warren and Mahoney projects defined by big roofs and prismatic geometry that, despite many being of significant size and some winning awards, are largely absent from the firm's canon, perhaps in favour of the PoMo that followed. Now called Focal Point, the complex was expanded to three screens by Dennis Manz in 1996.

⑪

1983

Levin Post Office

518 Queen Street East
Ministry of Works and Development



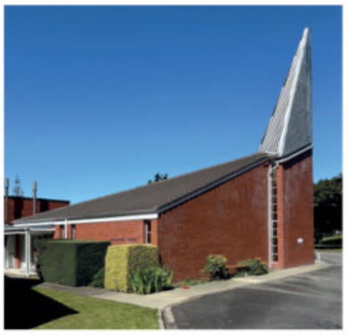
This prominent corner was marked by a 1903 post office by John Campbell (later given the title Government Architect), designed in the distinctive style his office employed in small towns all around the country. Campbell's landmark was demolished in the 1980s and the postal functions have since been withdrawn, but the replacement building has nonetheless become a symbol of the town. This role was reinforced when it served as the immediately recognisable backdrop in videos of the "Levin Car Invasion" of 2024, when 500 boy racers engaged in "anti-social road user activity".

⑫

1989

MacDonnell Chapel

685 Queen Street East
Manz:Smith Architects



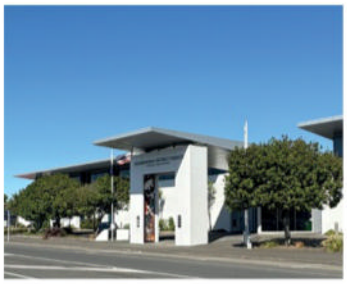
This chapel is part of the Horowhenua Masonic Village, designed by Wellington firm Structon Group and officially opened in 1978. The chapel resulted from a donation by a resident, the commission going to a local firm. Dennis Manz spent several years practising in the area, one of the few registered architects ever to be based in Levin. Other notable works include the Levin Gas Company offices at 83 Oxford Street (ca. 1980) and the Council-commissioned Regent Court mixed-use complex at 173 Oxford Street (1985), and, in the late 1980s, he provided the author with a summer job.

⑬

2007

Horowhenua District Council Building

126–148 Oxford Street
Designgroup Elliott Architects



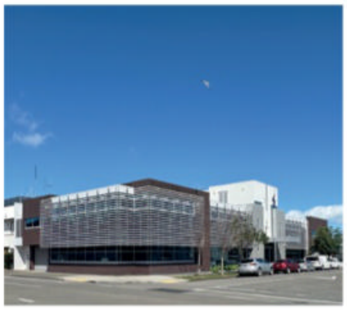
Wellington innovators Gabites, Alington & Edmondson made proposals for a civic centre but realised only an annex to the Horowhenua County Council office (1976). This was demolished in 2007 to make way for a supermarket car park. This new building makes clever use of one of Levin's few non-flat sites and is organised around a dramatic double-height foyer but, like that supermarket car park nearby, sets aside a defining imperative of main street architecture in small towns – build up to the lot line. Integrated art animates the structure and tells the story of key moments in local history.

⑭

2010

Levin District Courthouse

9 Bristol Street
Tse Architects



This building replaced a courthouse built in 1903 (opened the same day as the old Post Office and, likely, also designed by John Campbell), which has now been moved to the Rose Gardens on Cambridge Street. It won an NZIA Western Architecture Award in 2010 and the jury wrote of the building: "This contemporary take on a courthouse shows a good use of materials and colours throughout… The scale and proportion of the building complements both its function and the immediate environment. An excellent balance was achieved between functionality and security on this complex Ministry of Justice project."

Sources

Levin doesn't much figure in our published architectural histories. *Raupo to Deco: Wellington Styles and Architects 1840–1940* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2014) by Geoff Mew and Adrian Humphris is full of background on the Wellington-based firms, including Crichton & McKay, Bertie Kelly and Frederick de Jersey Clere. Clere fans might seek out Susan Mclean's *Architect of the Angels: The Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2003), and Warren and Mahoney fans should look for John Balasoglou's *New Territory: Warren and Mahoney* (Auckland: Balasoglou Books, 2005). The Samuel Hurst Seagar quote is from 'Architectural Art in Zealand' from the *Journal of the RIBA*, 29 September 1900: 481–491. The Bill Wilson quote is from 'The Small House', *Kiwi: The Annual Magazine of the Students' Association of the Auckland University College*, 43 (November 1948): 27–33. Both texts are accessible in Douglas Lloyd Jenkins' *New Dreamland: Writing New Zealand Architecture* (Auckland: Godwit, 2005). The global survey mentioned is Ann Lee Morgan's *Contemporary Architects* (Chicago: St James Press, 1987). Anthony Dreaver's *Levin: The Making of a Town* (Levin: Horowhenua District Council, 2006) is an in-depth local history which touches on architecture at various points.

Other addresses

1902; 1927
Former Bank of New Zealand
27 Queen Street East
L.G. West & Son; Crichton McKay & Haughton

1909
Railway Station
34 Oxford Street
NZ Railway Architectural Department under Sir George Troup

1956
Levin & District War Memorial Hall
1A Chamberlain Street
Gray Young, Morton and Young

1963
St Andrew's Presbyterian Church
87 Oxford Street
Prouse & Wilson

c. 1967
Steelweb Upholstery
30 Coventry Street
Adams & Dodd

1969
Levin Mall
191 Oxford Street
Lewis Walker, Glossop and Co

1970
Barraud & Abraham Warehouse
1 Mako Mako Road
J. Rex Roberts & Partners

1970
Levin Dyeworks
15 Tiro Tiro Road
Adams & Dodd

1990
Levin Aquatic Centre
Cnr Queen and Salisbury Streets
Burwell Hunt Architects

2015
Horowhenua Teen Parent Unit
74 Bartholomew Road
McKenzie Higham Architects

2023
Mabel Central Housing
10 Mabel Street
Wright & Gray Architects

Photography: Andrew Barrie. Map: Maya Haydock.

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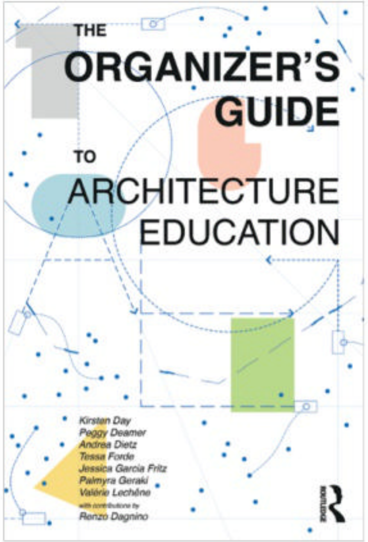


The Organizer's Guide to Architecture Education

Kirsten Day, Peggy Deamer, Andrea Dietz,
Tessa Forde, Jessica Garcia Fritz,
Palmyra Geraki, Valerie Lechene,
with contributions by Renzo Dagnino
Routledge, 2024

Reading *The Organizer's Guide to Architecture Education* was, for me, a little like listening to a sermon for the converted, and my bias as a reviewer should be declared early. The core areas covered in this book are Practice, Education and Advocacy – all central fields of interest and experience in my own architectural life – and the book felt like a perfect fit.

The guide is, in fact, "for anyone critical of the hierarchies that both the school and the profession deploy", and is aimed at students, educators and practitioners in architecture (and its broadened fields) who insist on change. It emerges from the work of recently established Architecture Beyond Capitalism ~~School~~ (ABC), an education platform run by the seven authors and one contributor of this book. There is a New Zealand connection, with two of the authors (Peggy Deamer and Tessa Forde) bringing a local flavour to some areas of a mainly USA-centred discussion.

The main argument made is for the inclusion of 'organizing' skills into the curriculum of architecture schools, alongside the de-prioritising of individual-author design, fundamentally changing the culture of the profession to serve our contemporary social and environmental conditions better. Through focus on the relationship between power and production, the guide offers an alternative to the current architectural education model that serves as a training ground for a capitalist economy.

Publication timing is perfect, landing in a New Zealand context of zero government funding for research into the Humanities (yes, including architecture), and a global context of growing anti-democratic and authoritarian ideologies. Education itself is in flux, affected by massive technological (AI) changes, with the relevance and role of universities in society questioned both locally and globally, and this guide is an important contribution to the discussions.

The book is structured into three parts, with the first providing an explanation of 'organization', its intention and players. It is discussed across several scales, applying and 're-claiming' the S, M, L, XL model used by OMA, Koolhaas and Mau (1995): Small (studio courses), Medium (curriculums), Large (university structuring) and X-Large (national professional and registration bodies).

The second part is a compilation of case studies, a very welcome collection of examples of educators and practices each with social and environmental justice at its core. They are arranged into themes as well as the aforementioned scales. Standout examples include the Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts in Thailand (L), Dark Matter U (S, M, L), Jane Rendell and David Roberts' 'Practising Ethics' (L), and, of course, Parlour (XL). (Every list reveals its own gaps and I did notice the absence of ĀKAU.) This is, for me, the strongest section of the book, providing valuable real-world examples to current and future students who are passionate about challenging the very education system they are in, and letting them know they are not on their own.

The deliberate decision to use current examples as case studies (most have been established since 2015) means that any longevity remains untested, and the cyclic nature of the important issues raised is not analysed until the next section. In Part three, historical examples such as CIAM (1928–1959) are discussed: satisfying for the historians among us.

Part three returns to the speculative and places architecture within a globally scaled system, with the intention of focusing on architecture's contribution to environmental healing. A series of essays offers visions and provocations for working as an architect in our current age, with the expected full range of academic resources included.

As declared, I am an example of a positively biased reader – although there were several areas of healthy disagreement and identified possible contradictions in intention. When ideological arguments use generalised terms, I believe there is a danger for their easy adaption to fit an opposing world view. We have already witnessed the recent melding of left and right-leaning populism, and a manifesto such as this could just as easily slide diagonally (to borrow a term as described by Naomi Klein in *Doppelganger*, 2023).

Ultimately, what I remain musing over is an identified common thread for 'organization' to thrive: community groups based on a strong ideological direction and with volunteered labour. My own experience also supports this – the early establishment of A+W NZ ran on both. Yet, these ingredients can contribute to an architectural education with non-intended aims: for example, religious fundamentalism and under-paid staff. I also wonder what happens when the radical becomes the institutional. Often, advocacy organisations based on strong ideologies can become a mimicry of the very institutions they were formed to critique.

This guide offers a practical framework to enable the inclusion of both social and environmental justice within our education and practice structures – such important aspects of architecture that their possible current omission should be shocking. I hope enough students read it to gain a clear understanding of the effects of capitalism on their education, and look to the case studies as possibilities for their own practices.

Lynda Simmons

Building an archive of Indigenous architecture: Joar Nango and collaborators

30 November 2024 – 16 March 2025
Objectspace, Auckland

If you haven't noticed, there's a movement rising. The groundswell is gathering force. And here, in little Aotearoa, we keep finding ourselves right in the heart of it – sometimes charging ahead at the front, sometimes holding the door open and stepping aside so our global kin can fill the room.

This movement I speak of is the global revolution of Indigenous architecture: a force that is resistant, ambitious, gentle, sometimes fragile, yet resilient – insistent and unyielding. It is the quiet but persistent power of indigenuity (indigenous ingenuity), reclaiming spaces that have long tried – and still try – to erase our presence through the global imperial colonial project.

Objectspace has done it again, holding open the door with generosity and thoughtfulness. Its new exhibition, *Building an archive of Indigenous architecture: Joar Nango and collaborators,* is another powerful reclamation of space – critical to discussions on Indigenous place-making, knowledge and creativity. It's a statement: we are here, and we will be counted.

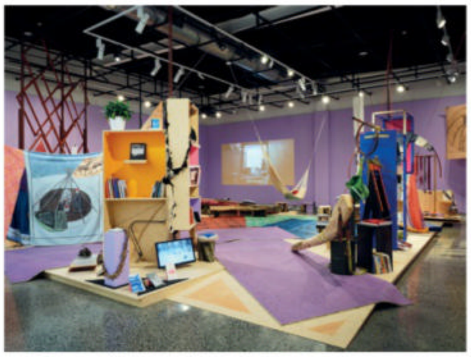
Walking into this gallery feels like stepping through a portal. The walls themselves stretch, holding more than what the eye perceives. The show lands softly in Objectspace's main gallery, with lilac walls, textiles, books, paintings, cushions and chairs assembled to invite you to sit and engage. It's a sitting room, a library – warm and welcoming. All it needs is a fireplace and a cup of hot chocolate. You're wrapped in the design collaboration of Joar Nango, with contributions from Eveliina Sarapää, Magnus Antaris Tuolja, Katarina Spik Skum and Ken Are Bongo.

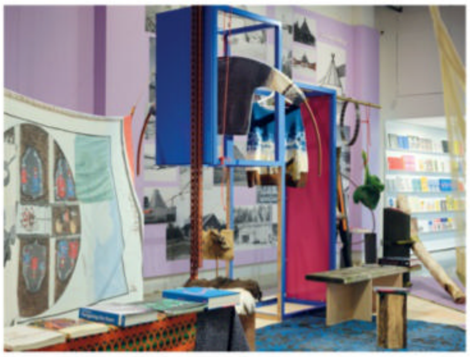
Building an archive of Indigenous architecture is an iteration of Nango's work *Girjegumpi* (the Sámi Architecture Library), which has, since 2018, travelled to multiple countries and across Sápmi territory (the traditional lands of the Sámi, covering the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia). As noted by the Objectspace description: "Named for the Northern Sámi terms 'gumpi' (a mobile cabin on runners) and 'girji' (book), *Girjegumpi* is a space for education and dialogue, addressing issues relevant to Indigenous architecture and resistance and Indigenisation. *Girjegumpi* is a gathering space, a reading room for study and a dreaming place for Indigenous imagination." As such, one of the critical aspects of the exhibition was the pre-work "study tour in which he visited Māori architects, artists and iwi to understand the whenua of Aotearoa and context in which *Girjegumpi* would sit".

Following the study tour, a wānanga was held at Objectspace before the show's opening, where Aotearoa-based academics, architects, students and artists were invited to bring texts of their own to add to the space. I was lucky enough to attend this wānanga and the theme of generosity overflowed in the room. Everyone shared texts that inspired and empowered their relationships to place-making, with a heavy overtone of Indigenous excellence and potentiality – past, present and future.

The recognition of Indigenous architecture is not a passing trend; it is a reclamation. It is an unapologetic revolution rooted in ancestral knowledge, collective memory and the unwavering determination of Indigenous peoples to assert their rightful place in a world built on colonial foundations, built on indigenous land. For the Sámi people of Sápmi, this revolution is sketched in the snow and carved into the timber of their homelands. Architects like Joar Nango are not merely designing buildings and installations or orchestrating discussions; they are weaving stories of resistance and revitalisation. His work, often collaborative, challenges the Western notion of architecture as static and sterile. It honours the fluid, relational systems of Sámi culture – reminding us that architecture and art, like sovereignty, can be acts of both creation and defiance.

Nango's work links Sámi philosophy to global movements of Indigenous self-determination. Through collaborations with artists, scholars and craftspeople, he shows that knowledge resides not just in institutions but in materials, stories and relationships.





ABOVE, FROM TOP Sámi visitors, from left: Magnus Antaris Tuolja, Katarina Spik Skum, Eveliina Sarapää, Joar Nango and Gunvor Guttorm. Installation views. Imagery by Sam Hartnett.

Like Gil Scott-Heron's words, "the revolution will not be televised", this movement doesn't make headlines. It lives in the everyday acts of cultural reclamation: the stitching of reindeer hide, the bending of birch saplings, the grounding of place in memory. Sámi architecture, like other Indigenous movements worldwide, is not just about building structures; it's about dismantling colonial systems, retelling our stories and reclaiming our voices.

The revolution is here. It is lived, it is felt and it is built into the very land itself.

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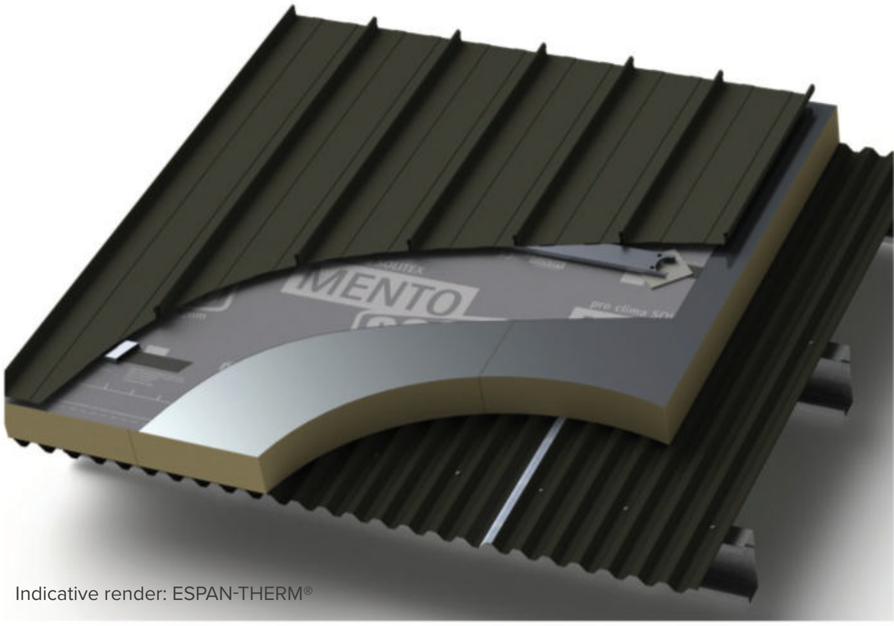

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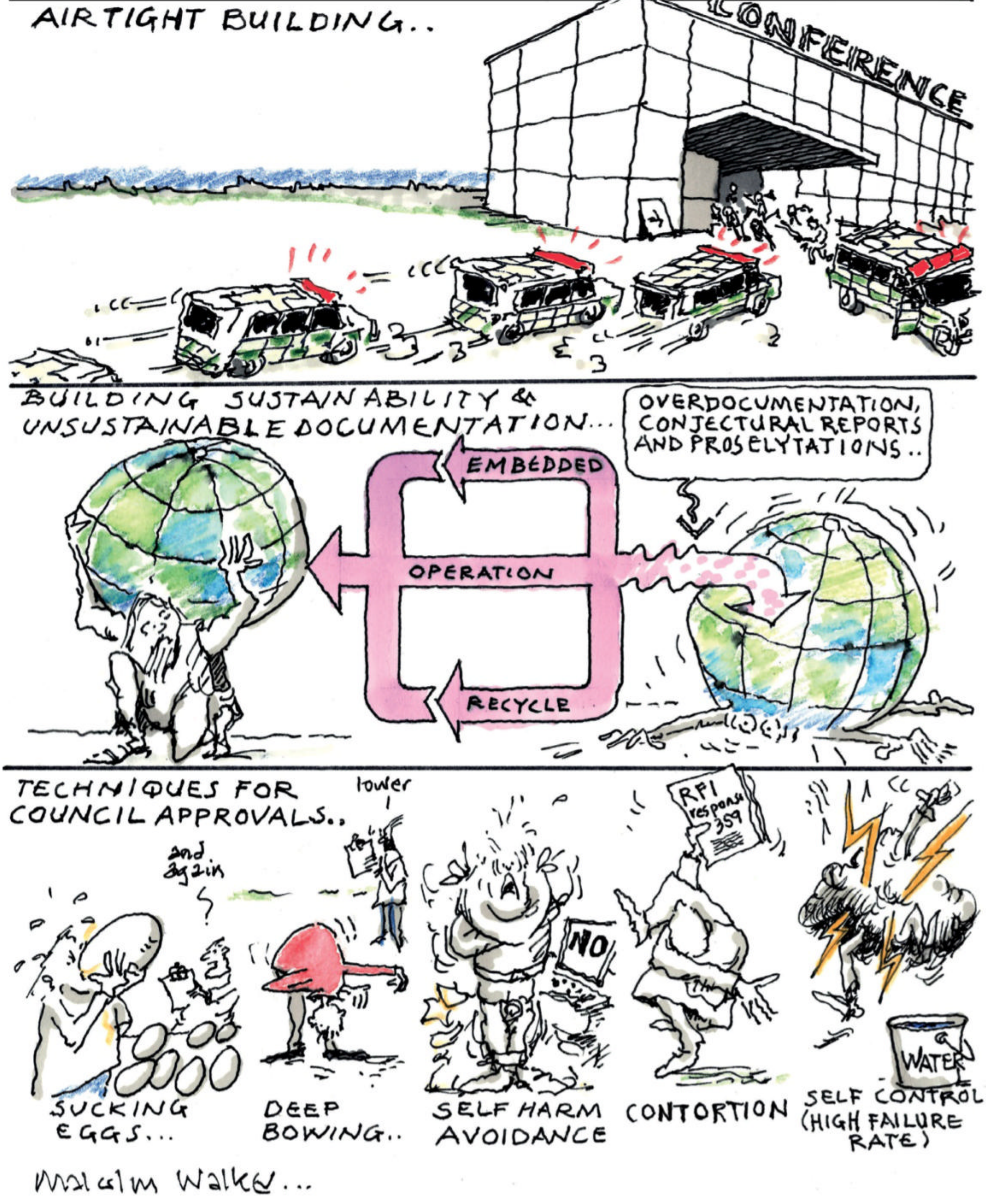
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